2022 THE ESSENTIAL PREVIEW

JACK WHITE ✸ THE WHO ✸ PAVEMENT ✸ TALK TALK ✸ THOM YORKE

MOJO
Music Magazine

161 REVIEWS
ELVIS COSTELLO
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DEPECHE MODE
& MORE

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“When the music calls, you go with it”

NEIL YOUNG

FROM HARVEST TO BARN: IN A FIELD OF HIS OWN!

PISTOLS VS ROTTEN
THE INSIDE STORY

DEEP PURPLE
FIVE DECADES IN ROCK

CAT POWER
LAST OF THE BOHEMIANS

CURTIS HARDING
21ST CENTURY SOUL POWER

THE GUN CLUB
PREACH THE PUNK BLUES

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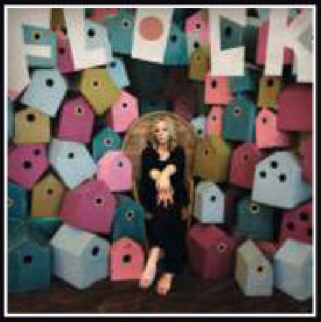

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OOKII GEKKOU
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MARINA ALLEN
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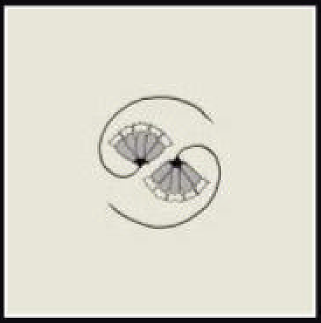

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G_D'S PEE AT STATE'S END
CONSTELLATION
LP / CD

THE MOUNTAIN GOATS
DARK IN HERE
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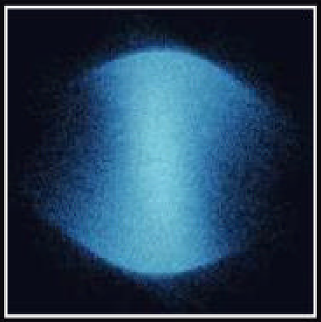

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SARGENT HOUSE
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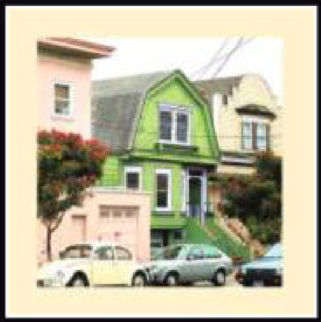

THE REDS, PINKS AND PURPLES
UNCOMMON WEATHER
TOUGH LOVE
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WILLIAM DOYLE
GREAT SPANS OF MUDDY TIME
TOUGH LOVE
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WHITE FLOWERS
DAY BY DAY
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LONDON ✦ MEMPHIS ✦ MONTREUX

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Julien Bourgeois

> “I’ve been called crazy for my whole career. I got blamed for *witnessing* things.”
>
> **CHAN MARSHALL AKA CAT POWER, P50**

FEATURES

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38 DEEP PURPLE Gillan, Paice and Glover regroup for one more blag, 50 years since *Machine Head*. But what are their current feelings about Ritchie Blackmore? “He’s a quirky guy...”

46 THE GUN CLUB How Jeffrey Lee Pierce and fellow “nihilistic misfits” emerged from Hispanic LA, and how voodoo, punk, blues and unleashed demons were manifested in *Fire Of Love*.

50 CAT POWER Chan Marshall’s struggles are hardly all in the past – 2021 saw her down to her last 38 dollars – but a new album finds her in her happy place: under the covers.

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62 CURTIS HARDING Child of Mennonites turned worldly soul star, late-blooming success suits Harding. “I had to create,” he tells David Fricke, “or I was going to go crazy.”

COVER STORY

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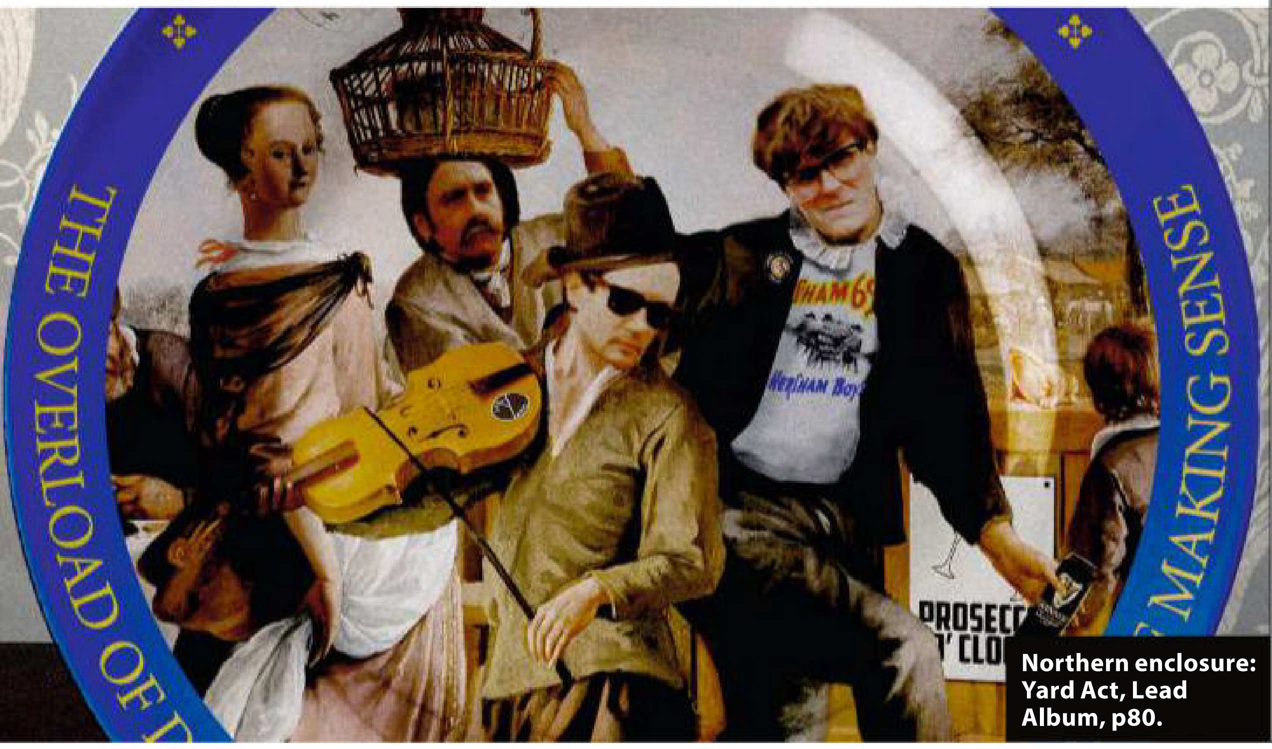

Northern enclosure: Yard Act, Lead Album, p80.

MOJO

REGULARS

9 ALL BACK TO MY PLACE Get ready to do the Mashed Potato, as Bill Fay, Tom Morello and Joan As Police Woman open up their tune-hoards.

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20 THE STRANGLERS JJ Burnel reflects on the punk institution's massively delayed farewell UK tour.

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24 MIKE COOPER Via more than 50 years of never playing the same thing twice, the folk rocker/steel guitar improviser explains what's needed to become a real Cult Hero.

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80 NEW ALBUMS Yard Act refuse to give in, plus Elvis Costello, Jake Xerxes Fussell, Urge Overkill, Eve Adams and Sunn O))).

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111 BOOKS Mark Lanegan opens up, plus Queen and Gospel King Rev James Cleveland.

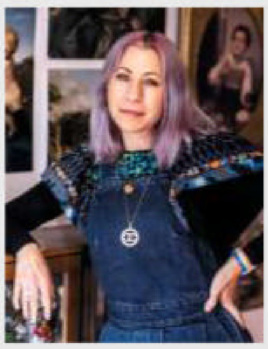
THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE...

Sylvie Simmons

Sylvie likes Neil Young so much she wrote a book about him, Reflections In Broken Glass (2001), and renews their acquaintance from page 66. She's also penned biographies of Leonard Cohen and Serge Gainsbourg. A Londoner, she lives a parallel life in California as a singer-songwriter – latest album: *Blue On Blue* (Compass).

Pat Gilbert

MOJO veteran Gilbert shouts Sex Pistols 'Bingo!' this month as he adds Paul Cook to previous encounters with John Lydon, Steve Jones and Glen Matlock (Sid Vicious hasn't been available since Pat's schooldays: pictured, left). Cookie's refreshing angle on all things Pistols and beyond starts on page 32.



Haus Of Lucy

Our Lead Album illustrator is a multi-disciplinary artist who subverts the everyday and the banal, whether that's adding an easyJet plane onto a 15th-century landscape or creating a range of fast-food themed horse brasses. Find her at @hausoflucy or www.hausoflucy.com

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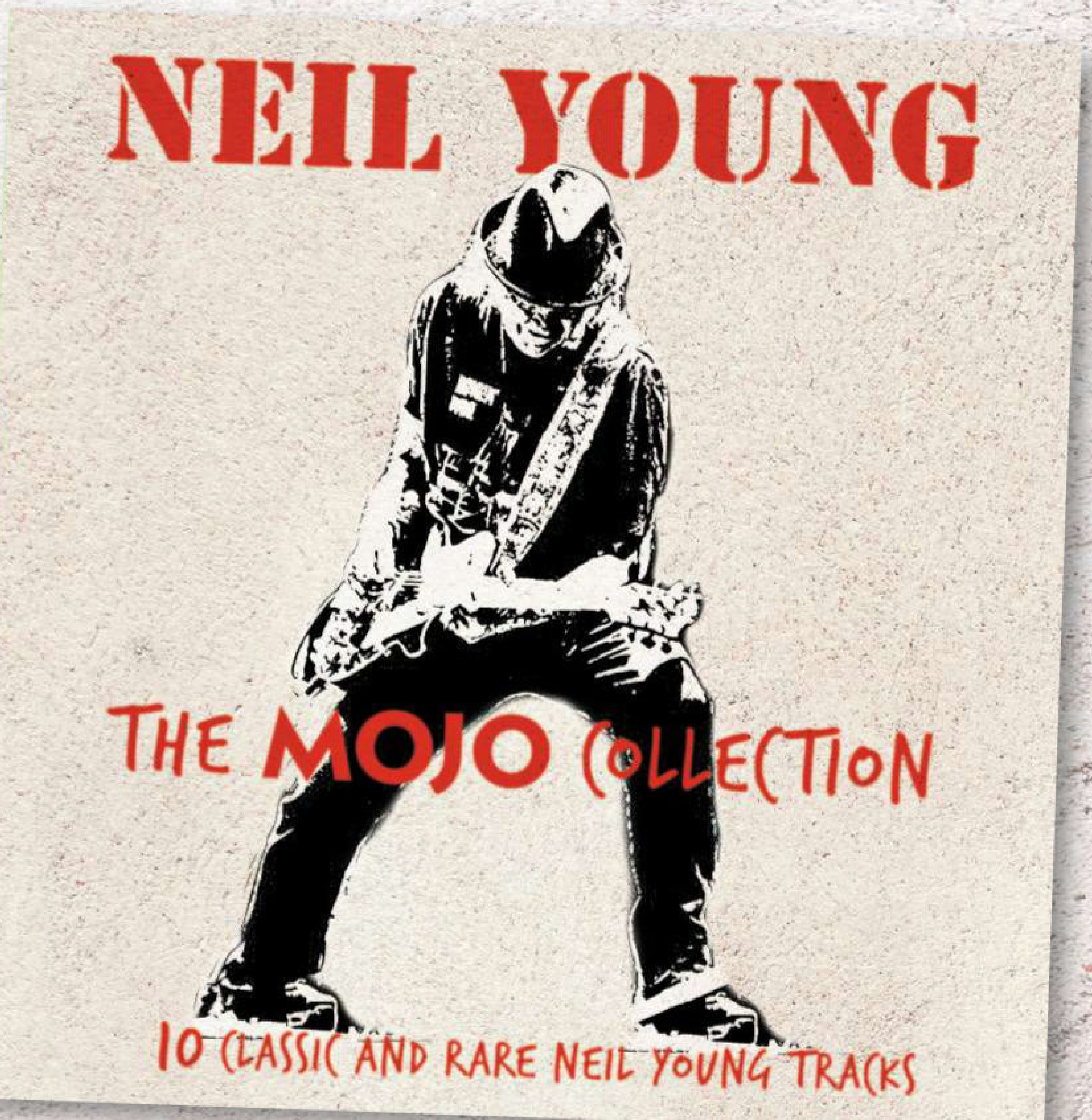
NEIL YOUNG

10 CLASSIC

IT WOULD BE AN EXCEPTIONALLY BRAVE NEIL YOUNG FAN who tried to encapsulate their hero's genius in 10 tracks. How do you honour both the relentless forward motion and the beloved constancy? What do you draw from six decades of prodigious music-making? The old and the new? The live jams and barnstormers? The uncontested classics and the undervalued deep cuts?

Tough gig. Fortunately, MOJO had some useful assistance in compiling this month's extremely collectable CD, in the shape of Neil Young and his team. With their considerable input, we've ended up with *The MOJO Collection*, a musical trip that begins in 2021, makes its circuitous way through highlights of the past 50-odd years, and ends up back in the present day, sending out signals from Young's current base high in the Colorado Rockies. The formidable Crazy Horse are often there for the ride, but The Stray Gators crop up too, and sometimes it's just Young alone: plaintive, exposed, indefatigable.

"The way it works is there's no plan," Young tells Sylvie Simmons in this month's MOJO cover story. But listening to *The MOJO Collection*, glimpses of a lifetime's spontaneous work all come together to make complete sense. Here's a true master, in all his ragged glory…


NEIL YOUNG
THE MOJO COLLECTION
10 CLASSIC AND RARE NEIL YOUNG TRACKS

NEIL YOUNG CRAZY HORSE BARN

1 HEADING WEST
(FROM BARN)

To begin, a rousing highlight from the brand new *Barn*, with good old Crazy Horse stomping out in *Zuma* style. "We started recording as we were learning the songs," Nils Lofgren tells us. "All of a sudden, [Neil's] on a roaring electric guitar and I'm playing the upright [piano], and we got a great rock tune."

Heading West by Neil Young & Crazy Horse (Neil Young) Published by Bandita LLC (ASCAP) ℗&© 2021 The Other Shoe Productions, Inc. under exclusive license to Reprise Records. Taken from the album *Barn*.

NEIL YOUNG CRAZY HORSE
Way Down in the RUST BUCKET

6 COUNTRY HOME
(FROM WAY DOWN IN THE RUST BUCKET)

Crazy Horse again, back in the groove in 1990 with a live version of this rambunctious *Ragged Glory* highlight. "When you play with Crazy Horse, you got to write the anthems, the longer songs," his faithful drummer Ralph Molina told Young recently. "[That's] where Neil gets to shine."

Country Home (Live) by Neil Young & Crazy Horse (Neil Young) Published by Silver Fiddle Music (ASCAP). ℗&© 2021 The Other Shoe Productions, Inc. under exclusive license to Reprise Records. Taken from the album *Way Down In The Rust Bucket*.

> "I had so
> and kept
> NEIL YOUNG

THE MOJO COLLECTION

AND RARE NEIL YOUNG TRACKS

YOUNG SHAKESPEARE

2 TELL ME WHY

(FROM YOUNG SHAKESPEARE)

"I'll be around for a while…" Across all the releases in Young's Archives and Official Bootleg series, *After The Goldrush*'s deathless opener crops up as often as any other song; seven times in total. This gorgeous solo take was captured at the Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, Connecticut, in January 1971.

Tell Me Why by Neil Young (Neil Young) Published by Broken Arrow Music Corp. (BMI). ℗&©2021 The Other Shoe Productions, Inc. under exclusive license to Reprise Records. Taken from the album *Young Shakespeare*.

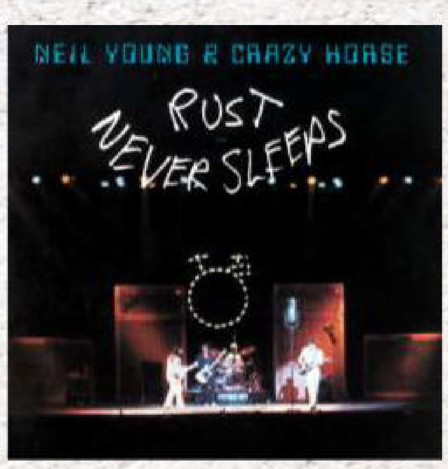
NEIL YOUNG + STRAY GATORS
TUSCALOOSA

3 OUT ON THE WEEKEND

(FROM TUSCALOOSA)

Moving on a couple of years, Out On The Weekend finds Young in Alabama with the Stray Gators in tow, on a tour that would eventually result in the *Time Fades Away* album. Here, though, they revisit the loping charms of Out On The Weekend from *Harvest*.

Out On The Weekend (Live) by Neil Young & Stray Gators (Neil Young) Published by Silver Fiddle Music (ASCAP). ℗&© 2019 Silver Bow Productions. Taken from the album *Tuscaloosa*.

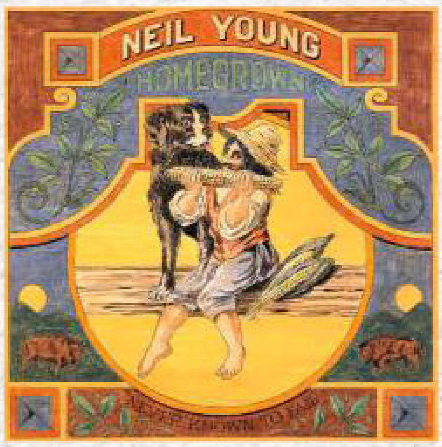


4 POWDERFINGER

(FROM RUST NEVER SLEEPS)

One of the best songs written by Young during his productive 1970s, Powderfinger was first attempted in 1975, earmarked for inclusion on the ultimately doomed *Chrome Dreams* LP. Four years later, it had mutated from acoustic plaint to chunky Crazy Horse anthem, their primal chops having been newly vindicated by the onslaught of punk.

Powderfinger by Neil Young & Crazy Horse (Neil Young) Published by Silver Fiddle Music (ASCAP) ℗&©1979 Warner Records Inc. Taken from the album ***Rust Never Sleeps***.

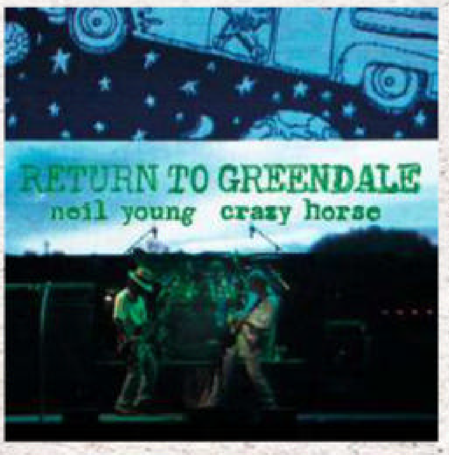


5 SEPARATE WAYS

(FROM HOMEGROWN)

A long-lost gem, recorded in 1974, that eventually surfaced as the opening track on the reconstructed *Homegrown*; that's Levon Helm at the kit. *Archives II* contains a radically different version, with the Stills-Young Band, that really should have made the final tracklisting of *Long May You Run*.

Separate Ways by Neil Young (Neil Young) Published by Silver Fiddle Music. ℗&© 2020 Silver Bow Productions, Inc. Taken from the album *Homegrown*.



7 FALLING FROM ABOVE

(FROM RETURN TO GREENDALE)

The tight narrative of *Greendale*, Young's 2003 eco-opera, means that it can sometimes be hard to imagine its songs in isolation. This live version, however, proves the opposite is true: heard out of context, the song's robust, independent strength comes to the fore. Great subtle work from Molina and bassist Billy Talbot, too.

Falling From Above (Live) by Neil Young & Crazy Horse (Neil Young). Published by Silver Fiddle Music (ASCAP) ℗ 2020 The Other Shoe Productions, Inc. under exclusive license to Reprise Records. Taken from the LP *Return To Greendale*.

AFTER THE GOLD RUSH • NEIL YOUNG

8 ONLY LOVE CAN BREAK YOUR HEART

(from after the goldrush)

We were surprised and delighted when this classic appeared on the tracklist – prompted, perhaps, by something Young said to us about *Barn* in this month's interview. "Some are like *After The Goldrush* songs," he told Sylvie Simmons. "Acoustic songs as well as electric songs. But there's really nothing that [Crazy Horse] can't do."

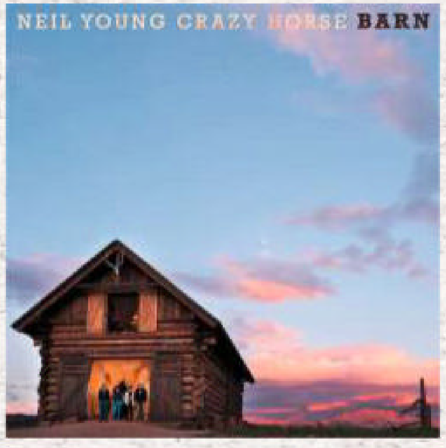
Only Love Can Break Your Heart by Neil Young (Neil Young) ℗ 1970 Reprise Records ©1970 Warner Bros. Records Inc. Taken from the album *After The Goldrush*.

9 MILKY WAY

(FROM COLORADO)

2019's *Colorado* ushered in a key new phase in Young's career, with a new recording base in the Rockies, and Crazy Horse reunited with utility player Nils Lofgren. This cosmic, awestruck song of new love highlights the band's mature mastery of the slow-burn: a sprawling electric workout remarkable for nuance more than fireworks.

Milky Way by Neil Young & Crazy Horse (Neil Young) Published by Storytone Publishing ℗ and © 2019 Reprise Records. Taken from the album *Colorado*.



10 TUMBLIN' THRU THE YEARS

(FROM BARN)

And here, to corroborate Young's *After The Goldrush* reference, is one final beauty from *Barn*. Tumblin' Thru The Years is another tender meditation on the passage of time and the consolations of an enduring relationship, with "old friends, and new, by our side" – notably, again, Nils Lofgren on piano.

Tumblin' Thru The Years by Neil Young & Crazy Horse (Neil Young) Published by Bandita LLC (ASCAP). ℗&© 2021 The Other Shoe Productions, Inc. under exclusive license to Reprise Records. Taken from the album *Barn*.

much stuff. I just recorded everything going, and I never stopped to finish it."

& CRAZY HORSE: THE NEW INTERVIEW. BEGINS P66.

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Joan As Police Woman

SMOKE ON THE WASSER

What music are you currently grooving to?

I've been listening to a song called Process by **Samora Pinderhughes**. I saw him play live recently, and he was just spectacular! I'm also listening to **Damon Albarn**'s new LP. And this record by **Meshell Ndegeocello** called *Ventriloquism* is really amazing.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Fresh by **Sly And The Family Stone**. The production is insane, and the textures of sound are so interesting. I love it, it has everyone's voices: women, men, black, white, American, British… it's super free.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

I noticed the cover for **Jimi Hendrix Experience**'s *Axis: Bold As Love* at a Goodwill and bought it for a quarter. I was probably 10, and when I put that record on, I remember thinking, "Can you do this on a record?"

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

Nina Simone. She's one of the greatest pianists and she's always in the moment. It felt like she had a really difficult life though, so I might like to be her from the outside, but from the inside, **Freddie Mercury**.

What do you sing in the shower?

Whitney Houston, **David Bowie** and **Marvin Gaye**.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Dirty Mind or *Sign O' The Times* by **Prince**.

And your Sunday morning record?

This depends on my mood. **John Coltrane**'s *A Love Supreme* is great on a Sunday morning. **Fela Kuti**'s *Expensive Shit* also feels great. If I'm in a different mood, **Keith Jarrett**'s *The Köln Concert*. [Those improvisations] are really interesting, they move above the surface of the music.

The Solution Is Restless is out now on PIAS.

ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING…

Tom Morello

STILL RAGING

What music are you currently grooving to?

I do a lot of hiking at night, and my playlist has been mostly an acoustic one – a blend of **Steve Earle**, **Ben Harper**, a little **Billy Bragg**, **Bob Dylan** and **Bruce Springsteen**.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

London Calling by **The Clash**. Spanish Bombs is a beautiful, poetic history lesson, but Clampdown resonates today of creeping proto-fascism. I remember hearing that lyric, "you grow up and you calm down", and it was like, "That's never gonna fucking be me, man!"

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

Kiss's *Destroyer*, at the local grocery store. They looked like superheroes and they sounded like Sabbath – a very intoxicating cocktail for an 11 or 12-year-old. Dropping the needle on Detroit Rock City was cinematic.

Parri Thomas, Travis Shinn, Lyndsey Byrnes

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

I would say **Joe Strummer** on one end, proving the key to making a global connection is to speak honestly in your music and to really mean it. And then **Randy Rhoads**. [His guitar-playing] was a great combination of improvisational fury and studied ability. You could study his songs in a college-level musicology course or bang your head to it in the parking lot of a heavy metal concert, and that appealed to me.

What do you sing in the shower?

The recurring song is The Ghost Of Tom Joad, the collaborative version with **Bruce Springsteen**.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

My Saturday nights used to be very different before I had kids, but we had some great disco dance parties during lockdown. Me and the kids and the grandmas, and it'll be **Commodores** and **Donna Summer**. Kids are on the trampoline bouncing around to YMCA. There's nothing like that.

And your Sunday morning record?

I've been going back and enjoying **Peter Gabriel** records. I love Mercy Street and Here Comes The Flood. They're beautiful songs.

The Atlas Underground Flood is out now on Mom+Pop.

Bill Fay

PROG-FOLK PROGENITOR

What music are you currently grooving to?

At present, I'm very moved by **Leonard Cohen**'s Come Healing, and Show Me The Place, as well as **Johnny Cash**'s version of Love's Been Good to Me. Also, **Nick Cave** and **Warren Ellis**'s Albuquerque, and Distant Sky. I've also been listening to an album sent to me by an old guitarist friend who is in the band **Gaffa** from Nottingham. Their new album, *Beaks & Bones For Buttons*, is a good one.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

After we recorded *Time Of The Last Persecution*, there were three albums that I listened to over and over. **The Beatles**' *Abbey Road*, **Dylan**'s *New Morning*, and *Home* by **Procol Harum**. One of these then, though many strong albums have come to pass since.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

I think it was **Little Richard**'s Lucille at a small local record shop in north London. I was 13. Not too long after, I joined the 50-yard queue at the same shop, for **Elvis**'s Jailhouse Rock.

> "I bought Little Richard's Lucille when I was 13."
> **BILL FAY**

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

No, it wasn't like that. As a youngster I just wanted to find out more about the piano after my brother's girlfriend showed me how to play a simple party piece. Before I knew it, I was singing and playing **Ricky Nelson**'s Poor Little Fool.

What do you sing in the shower?

I don't, but if I did, maybe I'd sing the old Irish song, The Mountains Of Mourne.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Matt Deighton's May You Give It All Away. He's a very overlooked guitarist and singer-songwriter. As well as **Wilco**'s Poor Places and **Ron Sexmith**'s Gold In Them Hills.

And your Sunday morning record?

It would have to be **Dolores Keane** and **Tommy Sands** singing Where Have All The Flowers Gone. Their voices. Incredible.

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Theories, rants, etc.

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LIKE A GOOD PARENT, THE EDITOR OF A music magazine probably shouldn't ever reveal their favourites. Nevertheless, it's always a pleasure to have Neil Young in the pages of MOJO, and this month's new Neil interview articulates a major part of his appeal – as a restless musical adventurer alive to the possibilities of the old and the new.

With *Harvest* reaching its 50th anniversary, Sylvie Simmons asks him about why he rejected the chance to revisit that record on a lucrative tour. "I'd rather do a new album with new musicians," Young reasons. "You can't recreate the past. If the past is preserved, you don't have to recreate it."

Young, as well as any of his peers, understands the importance of preserving his old work while he soldiers on with new music; an effective balance that MOJO also strives for each month. In this issue, we find Young reunited with Crazy Horse for the exceptional *Barn*, while simultaneously digging ever deeper into his archives. There's also a remarkable bonus: a CD that mixes together new jams, old classics and archival rarities to capture the multitudinous essence of one of the greats. It's one of the great MOJO CDs, too, and we're indebted to Neil and his team for compiling it for us.

Don't spook the horse!

JOHN MULVEY, EDITOR

Eggs break, chocolate melts, glass shatters…

I've been a reader from Issue 1, a subscriber for almost as long, and literally have the T-shirt to prove it! Thanks for another great edition [MOJO 337]. I was especially pleased to see your piece on the Carpenters, artists for whom a lack of cool credentials has always stood in the way of serious appreciation. Yes, their repertoire often edged into light entertainment, but Richard is/was clearly a truly gifted arranger, and enough can never be said about the sheer perfection of Karen's voice – quite handy on the sticks, too. Could she really have been gone nearly 40 years now? Kudos too for the Idles-curated cover CD. I won't pretend to be a fan of the band in particular, but they have excellent and varied tastes if this collection is anything to go by. I never get tired of The Flamingos' I Only Have Eyes For You. It's especially ironic bearing in mind The Flamingos' manager chose the song for them because he hated rock'n'roll and considered it to be a short-term fad, so advised them to concentrate on the oldies he preferred.

Adie Turner, Epping

Can I be frank a minute?

Articles on Sturgill Simpson *and* Buffalo Springfield in MOJO 337? Marvellous! And two mentions for the wondrous Stuart Duncan to boot, although I think he's better described as a 'fiddle player' rather than a 'fiddler', as are all masters of that instrument. Sturgill's recent bluegrass albums are outstanding and his vocals fit the style great, but the music would be flat without the backing musicians. I guess bluegrass is not commercial, but some of the modern mainstays, and the direction in which they take the music, surely deserve some coverage?

Bluegrass must have something for Robert Plant, Elvis Costello and T Bone Burnett to put so much faith in the musicians. Béla Fleck's recent excellent release, *My Bluegrass Heart*, and Billy Strings' third solo album, *Renewal*, would both stand up to close scrutiny. Then early next year, Punch Brothers (my own favourite live band) will treat us to their tribute to the late, much-lamented Tony Rice, *Hell On Church Street*. Bluegrass, and its wonderful players, enriches the soul. Maybe the Sturgill Simpson piece whetted appetites; time to dig a little deeper?

Jeremy Courtnadge, Worthing

➢

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I have to check the logbook

I was really surprised to read Kevin Rowland's verdict on the original recording of *Too-Rye-Ay* [MOJO 337]. There's a fair amount of prejudice towards this album, primarily because of Come On Eileen being overplayed so much in 1982. But I loved it at the time and I still love it today. Perhaps Kevin Rowland has always been searching for something, even if it always seemed "so-so", but if he improves this already brilliant album, it will be some achievement.

Lee Oliver, Tunbridge Wells

How many joints have you had today?

Can I start by concurring with MOJO 337's letter regarding Fountains Of Wayne? I'm a huge fan (I was lucky enough to see them three times in Glasgow) and a proper appreciation is long overdue. But to be fair, MOJO did give them a Top 5 spot in Albums Of The Year once (*Utopia Parkway*, if you're interested). On this subject of great 'lost' American bands, I would like to posit that Ween are the most underexposed and underrated band of the '90s/early '00s. Considering the amount of chancers and charlatans slavishly promoted by the UK music press during said period, this is quite the oversight. I only actually heard them, by accident, during lockdown, via a US podcast. Serendipity indeed. So I've started to dig into their sizeable discography. They have so many fantastic songs. They created at least four great albums (we can argue later about which ones). So MOJO, get your act together. You need to introduce your readership to the joy of the mighty Boognish and embrace the brown (fans will know what I mean).

Your readers will thank you for it. And thank me, in turn, for alerting you. I await the many plaudits. Strap on that jammypac and dive in.

Edward Neil, Galston, East Ayrshire

It's dark and lonely work, but somebody's gotta do it, right?

I rarely read letters in MOJO that applaud the writers of your book reviews, so here's one. Every time I buy a book that has been given four or more stars by your writers, I'm not disappointed. On the contrary, the reviews are always spot on. For instance, Baxter Dury's Chaise Lounge [MOJO 335] is indeed a gem, touching and thought-provoking, and those stories about The Sulphate Strangler are hilarious.

Mike Lebbing, Amsterdam

You're going to want to get good and fucked up before this meal!

Congrats for your marvellous *Fab Gear!* CD [MOJO 336], which will probably stay one of my all-time favourite MOJO CDs ever. I guess it wouldn't have been too hard to fill another volume with more Beatles reinventions, like one of the '50s pastiches from Big Daddy's *Sgt Pepper's*, The Inmates' *Meet The Beatles* live album, anything from the six albums by Hamburg's very own The Punkles, and tributes like What Goes On by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band or Every Little Thing by Yes – it goes on and on. Maybe on the next occasion?

Martin Schreiber, Lahr, Germany

Like Godzilla says to Mothra, man, let's go eat some place

Firstly, thank you for producing such a high-quality publication every month, it's very much appreciated. Secondly, I was very happy indeed to see that Floating Points, Pharoah Sanders & the LSO won album of the year [MOJO 338]. A beautiful, timely and deeply moving record. Great choice.

Jim, via e-mail

How would I forget something like that?

I don't know if you went to press before notification of Willie Garnett's death on October 15, but I was very surprised that he didn't have a mention in your Real Gone section. You've previously had a great write-up for Don Weller, who Willie played with for years, plus The Willie Garnett Big Band. He also played in Rocket 88 with Jack Bruce and Charlie Watts, to mention but a few. He was such a warm, very kind character. One of my favourite memories, from around 1978, is of Willie playing I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside on saxophone to my dog, who was sitting in the Take Five music shop's window in Hammersmith, howling along with him while people stopped and stared in disbelief. RIP Willie Garnett, you'll be sadly missed by everyone who ever met you.

Brian Walker, via e-mail

I escape real good

Can I be the first MOJO reader to say a massive thank you to your exiting Production Editor Geoff Brown and to wish him a long and happy retirement? I have followed Geoff's career for nearly 30 years. What a gifted man he is! Geoff has inspired me to check out new music and I am very much the richer for having a record collection that bears his influence. Most MOJO readers will have no idea about the level of knowledge, leadership and creativity it takes to consistently produce a magazine of such high quality. Geoff has hidden the wiring very well. I'm pleased that whilst he is retiring, he has happily agreed to the odd writing assignment in 2022. I shall very much look forward to these. All the best, Geoff!

Craig Isherwood, Poulton-Le-Fylde

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Printing: William Gibbons
MOJO (ISSN 1351-0193; USPS 17424) is published 12 times a year by H Bauer Publishing Ltd, Media House, Peterborough Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6EA, United Kingdom. H Bauer Publishing is a company registered in England and Wales with company number LP003328, registered address Academic House, 24-28 Oval Road, London NW1 7DT. VAT no 918 5617 01.
The US annual subscription price is $114.98. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container Inc, 150-15, 183rd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA.
Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256.
US Postmaster: Send address changes to MOJO, World Container Inc, 150-15, 183rd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA.
Subscription records are maintained at H Bauer, Subscriptions, CDS Global, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Lathkill Street, Market Harborough, Leicester LE16 9EF, United Kingdom.
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2022 THE ESSENTIAL PREVIEW ALBUMS

Back To Lifehouse

Townshend says: after 50 years, The Who's great lost opus is coming in 2022!

SPORTING A beanie hat and looking a tad knackered, Pete Townshend has filmed a series of short video messages (posted to Instagram) from his studio to reveal that an edition of *Who's Next/Lifehouse* is coming next year. "Three days working until five in the morning trying to keep up with some Who demos," he explained, with a mock-maniacal laugh. "If I am looking a bit shattered, it's because I am."

Pointing his camera at some of the instruments involved in the recordings – old organs, congas, a repaired ukulele – Townshend then redirected the focus onto a vintage eight-track machine that he's had to augment with old Dolby noise-reduction units in what he described as an "unbelievably terrible lash-up".

As he scanned down some of the original *Lifehouse* tape boxes, their spines and labels revealed work-in-progress versions of tracks which ended up on '71's *Who's Next*. Others featured outtakes including No Time At All and Too Much Of Anything (the latter surfacing on '74's *Odds & Sods*). The guitarist then zoned in on one tantalisingly long-lost track titled Ambition. "This is a song we're trying to recover," he teasingly offered.

Whether the project will involve an entire reconstruction of *Lifehouse*, he isn't yet saying. But it's no surprise that The Who's leader is revisiting the 1971 project – which was conceived as a rock opera follow-up to *Tommy* – since he's obsessively returned to it again and again over the past half century.

The plot of *Lifehouse* (which initially baffled the other members of The Who) involved a future vision of a polluted Britain in which most inhabitants are forced to live in hermetically sealed 'Lifesuits' plugged into an internet-like worldwide grid – albeit one which delivers food and medicine, alongside information. A young composer named Bobby hacks into the grid and launches a music festival named the Lifehouse at which, following the musicians' and audience's communal creation of a perfect, infinite note – spoiler alert – everyone mysteriously disappears.

Townshend told this writer in 2019 that he never planned for the tale to have a definitive, explainable ending. "Y'know, with *Tommy*, with *Lifehouse*, I *deliberately* didn't plot," he said. "I felt that it's wrong to tell a story and to tell people the ending."

Lifehouse originated as a Townshend film script sold to Universal Pictures in 1971, before being shelved, leaving The Who to attempt to shape it into a musical narrative via shows at London's Young Vic. Townshend was forced to slim the project down into the standard album format of *Who's Next*, but it's clearly remained frustratingly unfinished business. Down the years, it's morphed from a radio play to a website to the 2000-released box set *Lifehouse Chronicles*, featuring additional songs written between the '70s and the '90s. Last year, a graphic novel was announced, but has failed to appear.

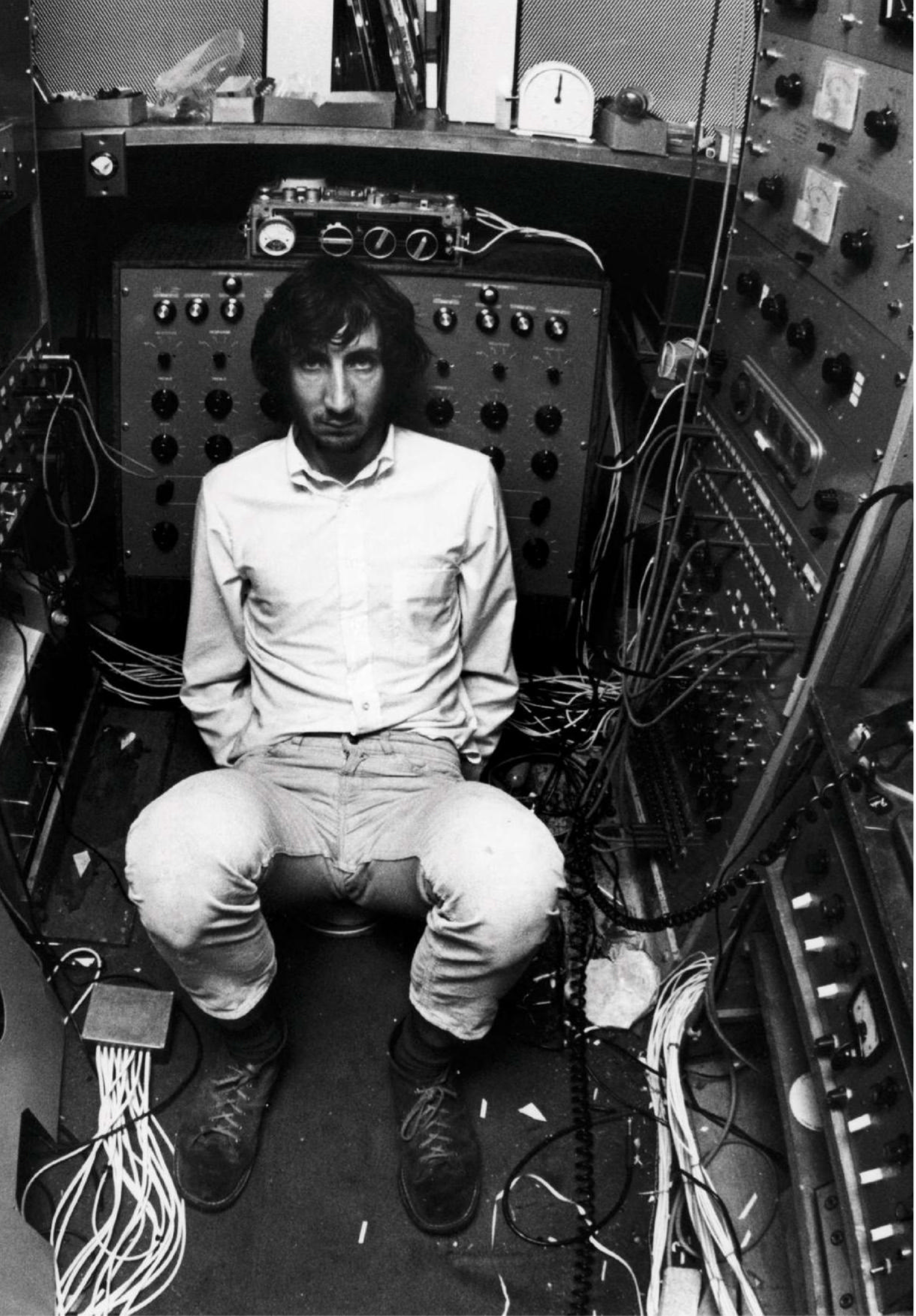
> "With *Lifehouse*… I felt that it's wrong to tell people the ending."
> **PETE TOWNSHEND**

Townshend acknowledges on video that The Who were planning to release the retooled *Who's Next/Lifehouse* in 2021, to mark its 50th anniversary. "We can blame Covid," he breezily explains. Quite possibly, then, both for Pete Townshend and for *Lifehouse*, 2022 will offer some kind of closure.

Tom Doyle

Totally wired: (opposite) Pete Townshend plugs into *Lifehouse*: (right) The Who lose the plot.

Getty (2)



Heads keep swinging: The Smile's Thom Yorke and Jonny Greenwood on duty with their other band.

Radiohead side project The Smile prepares to beam...

THE SMILE, Ted Hughes' gnarly and mystical 1970 poem, appeared enigmatically on Thom Yorke's Twitter feed on May 19, 2021, heralding the debut of a new group, also billed The Smile. Three days later, Yorke, Radiohead guitarist Jonny Greenwood and Sons Of Kemet drummer Tom Skinner duly appeared on the Glastonbury Festival Live At Worthy Farm livestream, playing eight varied and intriguing songs encompassing the spidery, Radiohead-like Panavision, The Smoke's phantom Afro-funk, and the churning, Cure-esque goth-pop of We Don't Know What Tomorrow Brings. After indie-punk maelstrom You Will Never Work In Television Again, Yorke felt an introduction was in order. "Ladies and gentlemen," he declared with manic edge, "we are called The Smile. Not the smile as in 'hahaha'... more the smile of the... the guy who lies to you every day."

> "It's an interesting juxtaposition of things... it will make sense."
> **NIGEL GODRICH**

The project, described as "a collaboration with Nigel Godrich" is expected to yield an album later in 2022, although there seems to be some confusion in the ranks over what to expect and when. In July, Godrich – the longtime Radiohead producer – was widely quoted as stating the album was finished and was "not a rock record", a story derived from a filmed interview with Greg Kot for The Coda Collection where Godrich appeared to say neither. On Twitter, he clarified :"Can I add to this that it's not finished and it is a rock record." To which Yorke replied, more drolly: "Can I also add that salt and pepper may also be added."

One thing Godrich definitely *did* tell Kot was that "it's an interesting juxtaposition of things but it does make sense... it will make sense." Anything else should probably be taken with a pinch of salt.

Danny Eccleston

Grin and bear it: The Smile (from left) Tom Skinner, Greenwood, Yorke.

NEW ALBUMS 2022

...**JACK WHITE** (below) releases two albums next year – *Fear Of The Dawn* in April and in July, *Entering Heaven Alive*. "I'm listening to a lot of Japanese music that's the soundtrack to anime," Jack told MOJO. "I've been inspired by it lately. It's nice because I don't really care what the words are and I focus on the melody and the rhythm"... heavy hints and new songs registered with ASCAP (including Fade To Black and End Of The Line) suggest there will be a new, and possibly final, album from **KENDRICK LAMAR** in '22 ...next year the **THE ROLLING STONES** (right) are expected to release an album utilising recordings made with late drummer **Charlie Watts**. "Songs are there," **Keith Richards** told AppleMusic in October. "It's a fascinating job and you can't retire" ...having announced dates in Turkey and eastern Europe, speculation is rife that **ARCTIC MONKEYS** will release a new album in '22. **Matt Helders** told BBC 5 Live, "it'll be next year... [the albums] always kind of pick up where the other one left off, in a way"...**JOHN FOGERTY** missed his deadline to release a new album in 2021, but continues to work on new material ...**LIAM GALLAGHER**'s *C'mon You Know* arrives in May: one of its singles will be entitled I Wish I Had More Power, ostensibly about brother Noel ...after July's cassette-only double-A side Bug Eggs/Tony Speaks!, hopes are high for more **DRY CLEANING** ...similarly, **FONTAINES D.C.** have tantalised with a new song, I Love You ...**MICHAEL STIPE** is finishing off his first solo LP ... **DEXYS** are working on a new LP. "It's not like a story," says **Kevin Rowland**, "but there is a unifying thing holding it together... there's a couple [of songs] that are pretty much finished and demoed to a really high standard" ...**Kevin Shields** insists there will be a new **MY BLOODY VALENTINE** album, telling Australian radio station Double J, "it's going to be one 40-minute album, two or three EPs and a double album... the first one will be quite warm and more song-based, the second one will be much more expansive" ...**ANNA CALVI** continues to work on the follow-up to 2018's *Hunter*. She told Gay Times, "It's always a bit of a headfuck to make an album... [the new record] feels more introspective" ...**ZZ TOP** will complete recordings begun with late bassist and singer **Dusty Hill**, who left us in July. "We've got a couple of things that'll make sense," **Billy F Gibbons** told Variety ...**Matt Johnson**'s working on the first all-new **THE THE** song album since 2000's *NakedSelf*. "I've got a lot of lyrics and music written, now it's a case of putting it all together... I'm further down the line than people would imagine" ...**SUEDE** continue to work on a new record. They requested fans download voice recordings singing along to lines including "steal my blue sky" and "shut up and hit that metal" to a special Suede dropbox ...and finally, **BIG BOI** from **Outkast** says he's got a duet with **KATE BUSH** ready to put out when the time is right...

Getty, Claude Gassian, , David James Swanson

Just like gold: David Bowie with Spiders Mick Ronson and Woody Woodmansey, 1972.

Hunky Dory? Ziggy at 50? Blackstar? What's next for the Bowie catalogue?

IN SEPTEMBER, when Warner Music announced they would now be representing David Bowie's 2000-2016 catalogue as well as his post-1968 recordings, they promised "many more exciting releases on tap"; the next logical step being a box set on the template set since 2015, featuring *Heathen*, *Reality*, *The Next Day* and *Blackstar*.

Yet there was no fanfare or anniversary edition when *Hunky Dory* – often considered Bowie's best album – turned 50 last month. Bowie-watchers hope it may at last get the expanded treatment in 2022, with the addition of officially unreleased songs including How Lucky You Are and the original version of Shadow Man. There's also speculation that a supposed post-*Hunky Dory* LP for which Bowie's tracklist exists may be realised like 'lost' 1974 album *The Gouster* was in 2016.

The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars also turns up the volume in June, as it too reaches 50. There is still material awaiting release for an expanded reissue: in 1998, for example, Bowie told Radio 1 he was "re-working" unfinished Ziggy-era material for a double album soundtrack for a proposed film, theatre piece and internet project around the album's 30th anniversary in 2002. Later clarified as six songs, he said they had "an authenticity of the period about them". It means that *Ziggy* outtake Blackhole Kids might yet find its way into the public domain. "I have no idea why it wasn't on the original [*Ziggy Stardust*] album," said Bowie in 1999, always several steps ahead. "Maybe I forgot."

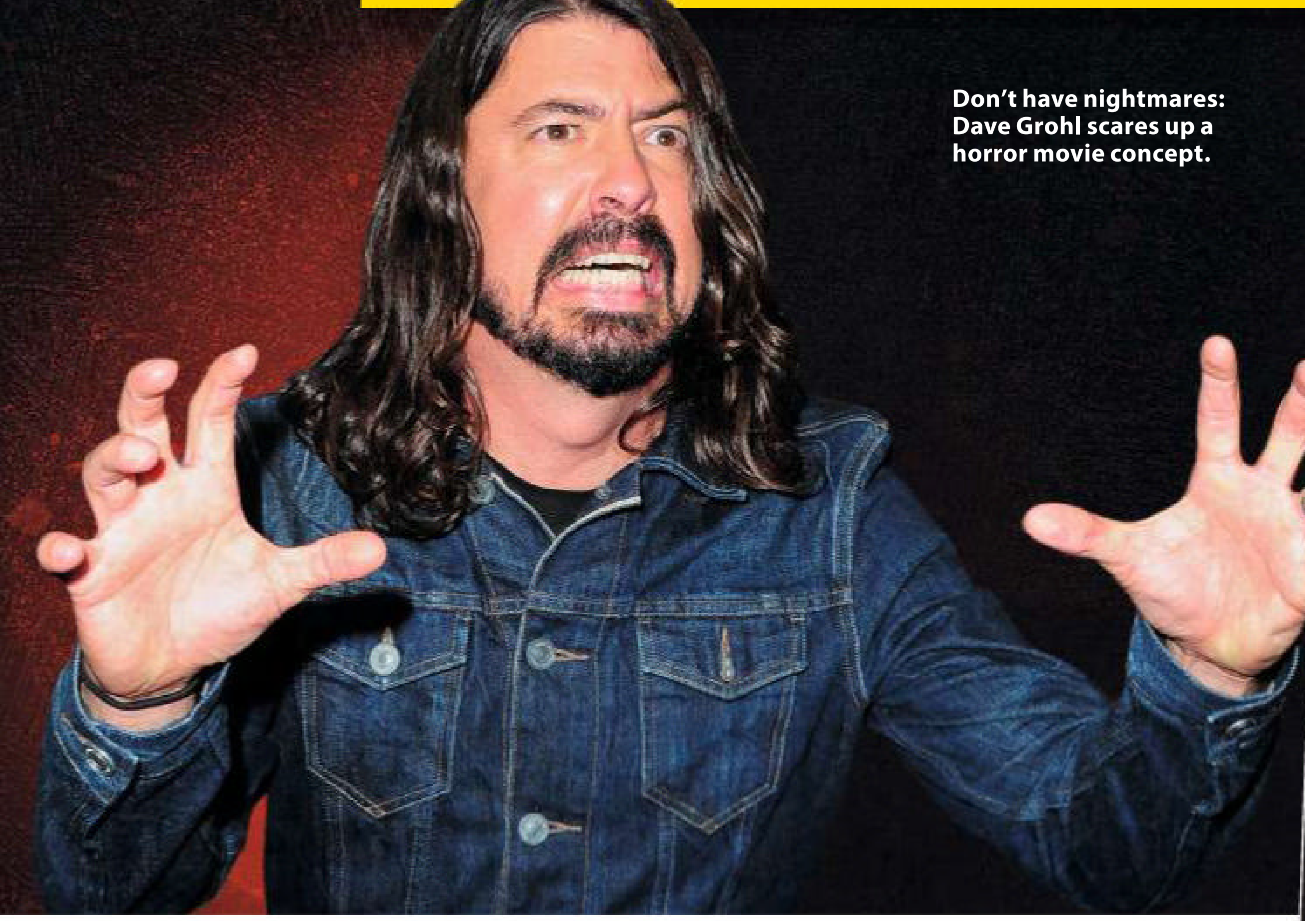
Additional reporting by David Buckley

> "I have no idea why it wasn't on the original album..."
>
> DAVID BOWIE

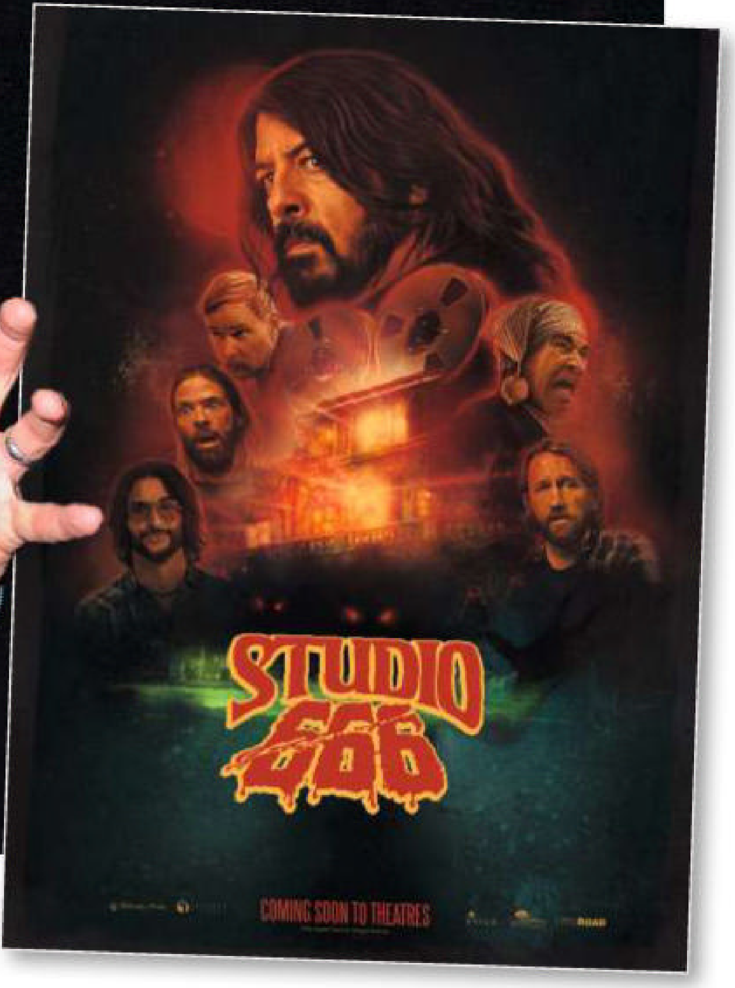
REISSUES 2022

...**NEIL YOUNG** has said recordings of CSNY at the Fillmore East in 1970 are "in the pre-production phase". There will also be further releases in his Official Bootleg Series, and hopes for a 50th anniversary edition of *Harvest* are high ...the opening of **CAN**'s live archive continues in 2022. Next up is a gig recorded in Cuxhaven in 1975. "It's very interesting and I like it very much," says the group's keyboardist **Irmin Schmidt**. "If there are early recordings of our concerts with Damo [Suzuki, vocals], I'll try to get some of them." He adds the notion of polishing up the legendary ur-Can tape *Prehistoric Future* is "not a bad idea" ...a multi-format Super Deluxe Edition of **KAREN DALTON**'s (above) *In My Own Time* is released in March, expanded with alternate studio takes and six unreleased live performances in Germany and Switzerland in 1971 ...the back catalogue of independent legends **FELT** will be reissued in radically re-designed typographical sleeves. New vinyl versions of the group's compilations *Bubblegum Perfume* and *Gold Mine Trash* will also be released ...there's speculation that the next **PRINCE** (right) album to be expanded with outtakes and rarities will be 1991's *Diamonds And Pearls* ... with a title devised by the late **Neil Innes**, *Still Barking* is a 20-disc box set of **THE BONZO DOG DOO-DAH BAND**. Overseen by the surviving Bonzos with audio supervised by **Andrew Sandoval**, it will contain all of the group's official albums, singles, BBC sessions, demos, curios, outtakes, mono and stereo mixes and live performances, plus a lavishly-illustrated book. Three DVDs will feature all of their appearances on '60s TV show Do Not Adjust Your Set and more rare performances ...coming in spring, **CABARET VOLTAIRE**'s albums *The Crackdown*, *Micro-Phonies* and *The Covenant, The Sword And The Arm Of The Lord* will be re-released on coloured vinyl ...in March, **THE CORAL** release remastered editions of their debut album: two unheard songs from the original sessions, Tumble Graves and She's The Girl For Me, will appear on a bonus disc ...in '22 the Cherry Red label will release a recording of **THE FALL**'s first gig, from May 1977, as part of a larger box set focusing on the group's early years ...a collection of official **KRAFTWERK** remixes will be released next year, also featuring some new re-edits of classic songs ... box set compiler of note **Andrew Batt** is preparing two new **BOBBIE GENTRY** projects and a **MARIANNE FAITHFULL** compilation: he's also working on reissues of **RICHARD THOMPSON**, **DANA GILLESPIE** and **SANDY DENNY** ...the first fruits of **JOE MEEK**'s rescued 'Tea Chest Tapes' arrives in the middle of '22: a 60th anniversary 10-inch mini-album of The Tornados' worldwide hit Telstar will feature sound effects, alternate versions, demos and the song remastered by producer and Meek fanatic **Alan Wilson** of Bristol's Western Star Studio. Wilson muses that among the other 1,850-plus tapes he's been trawling, "there'll be some stuff we won't be able to identify – there's a compilation in itself..."

Shutterstock, Christian Rose, Alamy



Don't have nightmares: Dave Grohl scares up a horror movie concept.



Foo Fighters scream on screen at Studio 666

NO STRANGERS to dressing up and capering around in their music videos, Foo Fighters have now broadened their acting ambitions into a full-length feature film. Titled Studio 666 and described as a "horror comedy", the movie is due for theatrical release in the US in February (with a UK release date still to be confirmed). "There's no other band stupid enough to do this," Grohl stresses to MOJO. "It's absolutely insane."

Filmed in the same house in Encino, Los Angeles, where the band recorded their latest LP, *Medicine At Midnight* – in MOJO 318, Dave insisted it was haunted – Studio 666 was directed by BJ McDonnell (responsible for 2013 slasher flick Hatchet III, along with various Slayer videos). While the band are keeping the full plot details under wraps, Grohl says that the basic premise is centred around disturbing goings-on at the house while the Foos are recording, with the hauntings revealed to involve a fictitious group called Dream Window who made a record there decades before. "The singer went nuts," he elucidates, "and murdered his whole band over creative differences."

MOJO visited the Encino house/set back in February 2020, and witnessed a hive of cinematic activity, where Grohl was being fitted with demonic, red-eyed contact lenses and false, fang-like teeth. Only days later, however, the production was shut down due to the pandemic.

"We had filmed most of the movie," Grohl explains now. "All we had to film was basically the few ending scenes. Then months and months went by. We would have meetings to talk about how we could possibly finish this movie with all of the new restrictions and compliance: 'How are we going to fucking pull it off?'

"So, we came up with a plan. And those six days of shooting turned into about three weeks because of all of the new regulations that really slow things down. We were one of the first productions in Los Angeles back after the Covid thing. We did it safely and we actually pulled it off."

During lockdown, a trailer was cut together to be screened for distributors, which further emboldened the band to push forward. "We watched that trailer," says Grohl, "and we were like, 'Holy fucking shit.' I mean, honestly, talk about far beyond anyone's expectations… It's a *movie* movie. We all were just like, 'Oh my god, let's finish this.'"

The wider cast of Studio 666 features actual, proper actors, including Leslie Grossman (American Horror Story), Will Forte (Saturday Night Live) and Jeff Garlin (Curb Your Enthusiasm). BJ McDonnell, meanwhile, places Studio 666 in the long-lost '60s and '70s tradition of bands making daft and ambitious feature films.

"It's been years since we've seen something like The Beatles' Help!, The Monkees' Head, or Kiss Meets The Phantom Of The Park," the director points out. "Take that old-school band film fun, mix it with horror and Studio 666 is born."

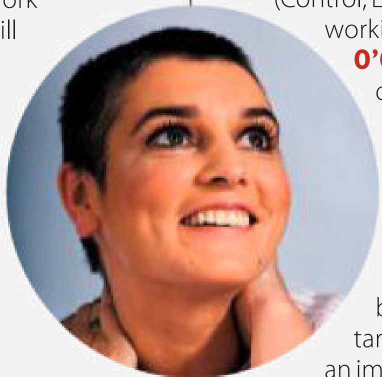
Audiences can expect a mixture of gore, laughs and high-end special effects, says Grohl. "A couple of scenes, they're so fucking epic, dude," he enthuses. "Just when you think we couldn't come up with anything more ridiculous… It really, really will blow your mind."

Tom Doyle

> "There's no other band stupid enough to do this."
> **DAVE GROHL**

ALSO FILMING

…Hoppy – Underground Head documents the life and times of **JOHN 'HOPPY' HOPKINS**, whose remarkable countercultural agitations in photography, the International Times and the 14 Hour Technicolor Dream remain comparatively untold. Filmmaker **Malcolm Boyle** promises "exclusive interviews blended with unseen archive" …**Paul Dugdale** continues to work on his **PRODIGY** documentary. In a statement, **Liam Howlett** and **Maxim** swore, "THIS FILM WILL BE MADE WITH THE SAME INTEGRITY THAT OUR MUSIC IS" (capital letters artistes' own) …**Kenneth Branagh** will direct a biopic of the **BEE GEES**. Scripted by **Ben Elton** and executively produced by **Barry Gibb**, it's co-produced by Bohemian Rhapsody producer **Graham King** …directed by **Estevan Oriol**, **CYPRESS HILL** doc Hits From The Bong will premiere on the Showtime network …**Martin Scorsese** will direct a **GRATEFUL DEAD** biopic, with **Jonah Hill** as **Jerry Garcia** …high on the success of Summer Of Soul, **Questlove** continues to work on his **SLY STONE** (left) documentary …**Baz Luhrmann**'s **ELVIS** is scheduled for release in summer. **Tom Hanks** plays **Colonel Tom Parker** while **Austin Butler** takes the title role …**Orian Williams** (Control; England Is Mine) is working on a **SINÉAD O'CONNOR** (left) documentary …**Brett Morgen**, who directed Kurt Cobain: Montage Of Heck, is to make a **DAVID BOWIE** film which, reported Variety, will be "neither documentary nor biography, but an immersive cinematic experience with thousands of hours of never-before-seen material…"



Alamy (2), Getty

Specs Enduction Hours: regular mystery man and eternal spirit, Mark Hollis.

The life of Mark Hollis, told in A Perfect Silence

WRITER, BROADCASTER and teacher Ben Wardle likens Talk Talk's out-of-time 1988 masterwork *Spirit Of Eden* to the "post-rock equivalent of the Sex Pistols at the Manchester Free Trade Hall – everyone who bought it went off and started telling everyone else about it."

This mix of reverence and evangelism will also be present in Wardle's book A Perfect Silence. Out in 2022, its ambitious aim is to capture the life of Talk Talk's genius/mystic Mark Hollis and the spiritual-classical music he dreamt up. "[Bassist] Paul Webb was famously quoted as saying, 'I'd hate to say I ever knew him,'" says Wardle of his elusive subject. "I spoke to a number of people who dismissed it as an impossible task, and to a certain extent, it was."

Only to a certain extent. Starting the hunt in Southend with a friend of Hollis's brother Ed, who managed Eddie And The Hot Rods, Wardle began working in earnest at the beginning of the Covid era. Almost two years on he'd spoken to interviewees including early Talk Talk member Simon Brenner, manager Keith Aspden and sleeve artist James Marsh, plus numerous studio collaborators. Also on the record are A&R men, schoolfriends and even those who only knew Hollis after he retired from music in 1998. The members of Talk Talk were, however, not involved.

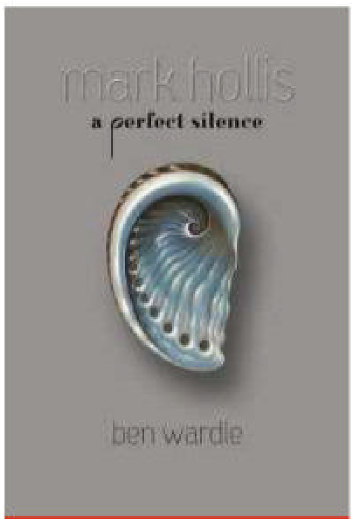
"I respect the people from the story who want to respect Mark's silence as it were," says Wardle. "But I spoke with all the musicians who worked with him on the Talk Talk records and the solo record, on the live tour – pretty much everyone who worked with him or knew him in any meaningful way."

The story takes in mysterious, leap-of-faith recording sessions followed by pub visits to play a Blockbusters-themed fruit machine, Hollis's post-1998 activities ("he was definitely playing music [but] anything he did never really left the house") and the 4AD label's attempt to sign him. Rumours of heroin use are also addressed. "Hard drug use was exclusively his brother Ed's area, and not his," states Wardle.

Other aspects of the Hollis myth will, it seems, be gently busted. "A lot of books tend to mystify the record company-versus-artist thing," says Wardle. "In many ways that story of Mark Hollis annoys me, partly because I've got a bit of baggage left over from being an A&R man and knowing that record companies aren't entirely made up of cunts. The patience and the investment and the lack of interference was admirable, I think, from EMI, even though they did let him down in the end. I didn't want to de-mystify Mark Hollis, but I did want to remove all of the claggy bullshit which has attached itself to the story in the last 30 years."

Consequently, he says, a real person with a family who played golf and rode motorbikes emerges. "I hope after reading this you'll feel like he was a human being rather than just this sort of, symbol of post-rock," says the author, "but also, like Bob Dylan, that what makes him tick and why he does things is just a mystery. I wanted to make him familiar, but also keep that mystery."

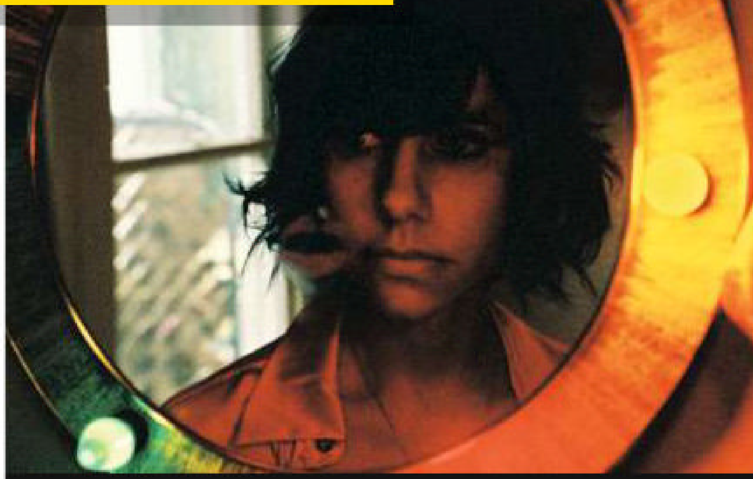
Ian Harrison



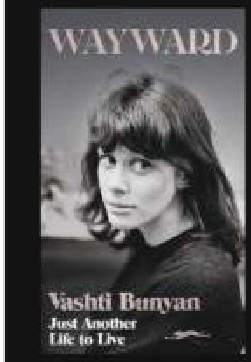
> "People dismissed it as an impossible task."
> **BEN WARDLE**

A Perfect Silence will be published by Rocket 88. See markhollisbook.com for ordering info.

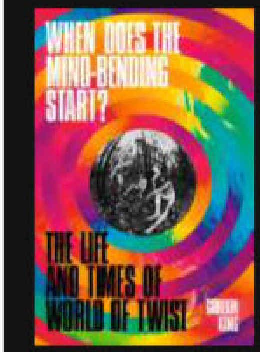
Getty, Bridgeman Images, Maria Mochnacz



OTHER BOOKS



…**VASHTI BUNYAN**'s memoir **Wayward: Just Another Life To Live** will be published by White Rabbit in April. It focuses on her 1970 debut LP *Just Another Diamond Day* and her creative re-emergence more than 30 years later …coming in May from Omnibus: **I'll Be There, My Life In The Four Tops** by **DUKE FAKIR** with Kathleen McGhee …in spring, Nine Eight Publishing presents **The Islander – My Life In Music And Beyond**. The autobiography of Island Records boss **CHRIS BLACKWELL** (out in time for his 85th birthday), Marley, U2 and Roxy will appear alongside Errol Flynn, Miles Davis and Noel Coward, among others …in April, Omnibus publish Rory Sullivan-Burke's **The Light Pours Out Of Me: The Authorised Biography Of JOHN McGEOCH**. Within, admirers including Jonny Greenwood and Johnny Marr pay tribute to the late Magazine/Banshees/ PiL guitarist …in April, Picador releases **P.J. HARVEY**'s (top) self-illustrated, Dorset-dialect magic realist poem **Orlam** …written by Richard Morton Jack, **NICK DRAKE** (above)**: The Authorised Biography** is scheduled for September. Publishers Hodder & Stoughton promise "deeply personal archive material unavailable to previous biographers" …planned for October, Little, Brown will publish Alan Clayson's **Mother Superior: The Saga Of FRANK ZAPPA And The Mothers Of Invention: The Authorised Biography** …also from Nine Eight in May: **When Does The Mind-Bending Start?** Gordon King's memoir of beloved Manc cults **WORLD OF TWIST** …in May, Penguin publish **Good Pop, Bad Pop: An Inventory** by **JARVIS COCKER**, a narrative prompted by the clearing out of the author's loft… in July, Omnibus bring us **Glam! When Superstars Ruled The World** by Mark Paytress, while David Buckley's **Electric Dreams: THE HUMAN LEAGUE, HEAVEN 17, And The Sound Of The Steel City** follows in September…


WHEN DOES THE MIND-BENDING START?
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF WORLD OF TWIST
GORDON KING

Top man: Duke Fakir (second left) embraces his fellow Four Tops.

The Stranglers make their live return – but is it farewell?

Bass face: JJ Burnel channels The Stranglers' "certain spirit".

AS COVID raged, The Stranglers suffered a devastating blow when they lost founder keyboardist Dave Greenfield to the disease in May 2020. Yet, released last September, their album *Dark Matters* was one of 2021's most triumphant.

Now, as bassist and longest serving Strangler JJ Burnel confirms from his base in Normandy, they're ready to head back on the road. French dates, acts of God notwithstanding, should have just been completed: with Ruts DC supporting, a month-long UK expedition will begin at the Lincoln Engine Shed on January 25. Billed as 'The Final Full UK Tour', it demands the question: is this goodbye?

"It doesn't mean we're going to stop playing all together," says JJ. "I think we'll just be a bit more selective, just to retain our energy and enthusiasm, because it's a bit of a killer physically, after a certain age, and The Stranglers' gig is really physical. We're pacing ourselves so that we can last a bit longer, not only for live but also creatively. If we have one more album in us, who knows? We're not going to go quietly… we'll go out noisily."

Planning a different hit-heavy setlist every night, the group rehearsed 40 songs in September at their Somerset base. On hand was new keyboard player Toby Hounsham, ex- of Rialto and Mungo Jerry plus, says JJ, the Stranglers tribute band scene. Aware of the magnitude of the change, Greenfield's widow Pam published an open letter on The Stranglers' site asking for him to be welcomed to the fold. "He knew most of Dave's repertoire, he could play just like Dave, he was playing Dave's rig," says Burnel of the newest Strangler. "He's ready-made, half-cooked already. It's a bit freaky, to be honest, because he's a bit geeky like Dave was. So, if you believe in reincarnation, there you go, you have him!"

A seasoned road dog, JJ admits to a certain apprehension. "I haven't played to an audience for 18 months so it's going to be a steep learning curve," he says. "I don't know how it will feel for me to look up and not see Dave on-stage after 45 years. That's something we'll find out in the next couple of weeks." He does add that he's been keeping his hand in playing with his neighbour Jim McCarty, drummer with The Yardbirds. "It's fantastic – I asked him, 'Please can I play Over Under Sideways Down?' and he indulged me!"

Yet, as when Hugh Cornwell quit the group in 1990, there's no question of not going on. "There's a certain spirit," JJ says. "It's difficult to put your finger on it, but we've just had our first Top 10 album in over 30 years. *Dark Matters* has been well received everywhere, which is rare for us."

MOJO has to ask, might they kidnap and de-bag any unbelieving journalists, for old time's sake? "We don't need to any more, because our detractors are either dead or have retired," he says. "I think over time we've kind of earnt a bit of respect."

> "We're not going to go quietly… we'll go out noisily."
> **JJ BURNEL**

Ian Harrison

See thestranglers.co.uk for tour dates.

PAVEMENT BRING ON THE MAJOR LEAGUES

PAVEMENT ANNOUNCED their latest reunion in June… 2019. In 2022, they will finally play UK and American tours. But can they remember what the spur was to get back together in the first place?

"When we broke up in '99, around 2000," says guitarist Scott 'Spiral Stairs' Kannberg (above, far right), "[frontman Stephen] Malkmus said, 'See you in 10 years.' We reunited in 2010. And this was supposed to be 10 years later."

Thus the reunion of one of the essential US indie acts comes to us. They still haven't rehearsed yet, says Kannberg: "To be honest, I've probably only seen Steve Malkmus a few times over the last 12 years. I haven't seen Bob [Nastanovich, keys and percussion] since we stopped. It'll be like a family reunion! When I go back and re-learn these songs, memories and stuff will come flooding back."

He anticipates they'll rehearse 40-50 tracks to keep the setlists changing, and admits there's a definite *frisson* to coming back to Britain. "It's kind of where we started," he says. "If it wasn't for the UK, we would've maybe ended up like some forgotten band, who knows?!"

Pavement's place in the firmament is on Kannberg's mind, it seems. "We've become kind of a much bigger band over the years for some reason," he says. "Like when I was in my twenties or whatever, I liked Big Star and Velvet Underground and bands like that who were nobody when they were playing live really – I'm not comparing myself to those bands, because those bands are legends – but they were much bigger as time went on. I guess more people can hear you now – pretty soon we will be huge in India!"

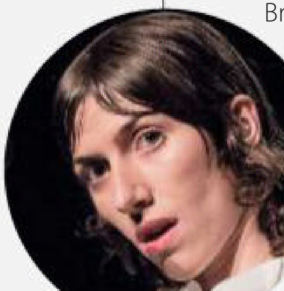
He adds he hopes to see original hand-standing drummer Gary Young – who is having a film made about him – in San Francisco, and that he has new Pavement music on his mind. "I did have a song that I'd like the band to maybe play on," he says. "It's called More Myths Than Hits.
I think it references it all – "I don't know why people thought they were hip/ They were more myth than hit." I think it would be fun, so hopefully I can talk the guys into doing it.

"I've tried to get away from it at times, and I have, but I always come back to Pavement," he concludes. "It's a big part of my life… my good friend who I grew up with tells me, 'That band fucked you up, Scott.' It did, but in a good way."

Ian Harrison

See pavementband.com for dates

2022 MORE TOURS



…**ABBA** Voyage begins in May '22 at a custom-built avenue in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in east London. Digitally de-aged avatars will play the hits accompanied by a 10-piece live band featuring Little Boots and James Righton of Klaxons. ABBA promise "the best version of themselves" …under the Parliament/Funkadelic banner, **GEORGE CLINTON** (left) plays long-delayed farewell UK dates in May …February will see the reunion of the original line-up of **THE DAMNED**, for four dates only. Supports include TV Smith and The Skids …**THE BLACK CROWES** play UK dates originally planned for 2020 in September 2022, before heading to Europe …**THE EAGLES** play four dates in the UK and Ireland in June '22: Robert Plant and Alison Krauss guest at the BST Hyde Park on June 26 …in September and October, **PET SHOP BOYS** and **NEW ORDER** play a joint tour of the US and Canada …**PAUL WELLER** makes good on Covid-cancelled live shows when he plays UK dates with European additions in April and May (he's not even making an album this year) …**NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS** tour Europe in June and July …**ELTON JOHN**'s Farewell Yellow Brick Road tour continues with UK stadium dates in June, with more to come in '23 …**OSEES** tour the UK and Ireland in May … **ALDOUS HARDING** (left) tours the UK in April before heading to the US in June …and, showing everyone how it's done, **BOB DYLAN**'s Rough And Rowdy Ways Tour will carry on until 2024…

Getty (2), Colin Hawkins, Tariana Westlund

SJM CONCERTS, METROPOLIS MUSIC & DF BY ARRANGEMENT WITH RIVERMAN MANAGEMENT & ITB PRESENTS

PLACEBO

2022

FRI 18 NOV
PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL

SAT 19 NOV
BRIGHTON CENTRE

MON 21 NOV
LIVERPOOL EVENTIM OLYMPIA

TUE 22 NOV
MANCHESTER O2 VICTORIA WAREHOUSE

THU 24 NOV
CARDIFF MOTORPOINT ARENA

SAT 26 & SUN 27 NOV
LONDON O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON

TUE 29 NOV
LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL

WED 30 NOV
LEEDS O2 ACADEMY

FRI 02 DEC
NEWCASTLE O2 CITY HALL

SAT 03 DEC
GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY

WED 07 DEC
CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE

THU 08 DEC
BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY

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NEW ALBUM 'NEVER LET ME GO' OUT 25 MARCH

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SJM CONCERTS & DF CONCERTS BY ARRANGEMENT WITH EDGE ST LIVE PRESENT

JOHN COOPER CLARKE

I WANNA BE YOURS

2022 UK TOUR

WED 16 MARCH
BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION

FRI 18 MARCH
LIVERPOOL MOUNTFORD HALL

SUN 20 MARCH
BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL

THU 24 MARCH
LEEDS O2 ACADEMY

WED 30 MARCH
BRIGHTON DOME

FRI 01 APRIL
CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE

SAT 02 APRIL
SHEFFIELD OCTAGON

THU 07 APRIL
SOUTHEND PALACE THEATRE

FRI 08 APRIL
LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO

TUE 12 APRIL
LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL

WED 13 APRIL SOLD OUT
MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL

THU 14 APRIL
MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL

SAT 16 APRIL
EDINBURGH QUEENS HALL

THU 21 APRIL
EXETER CORN EXCHANGE

FRI 22 APRIL
SOUTHAMPTON O2 GUILDHALL

SAT 30 APRIL
GATESHEAD SAGE

FRI 10 JUNE
CARDIFF ST DAVID'S HALL

SAT 11 JUNE
TENBY DE VALENCE PAVILION

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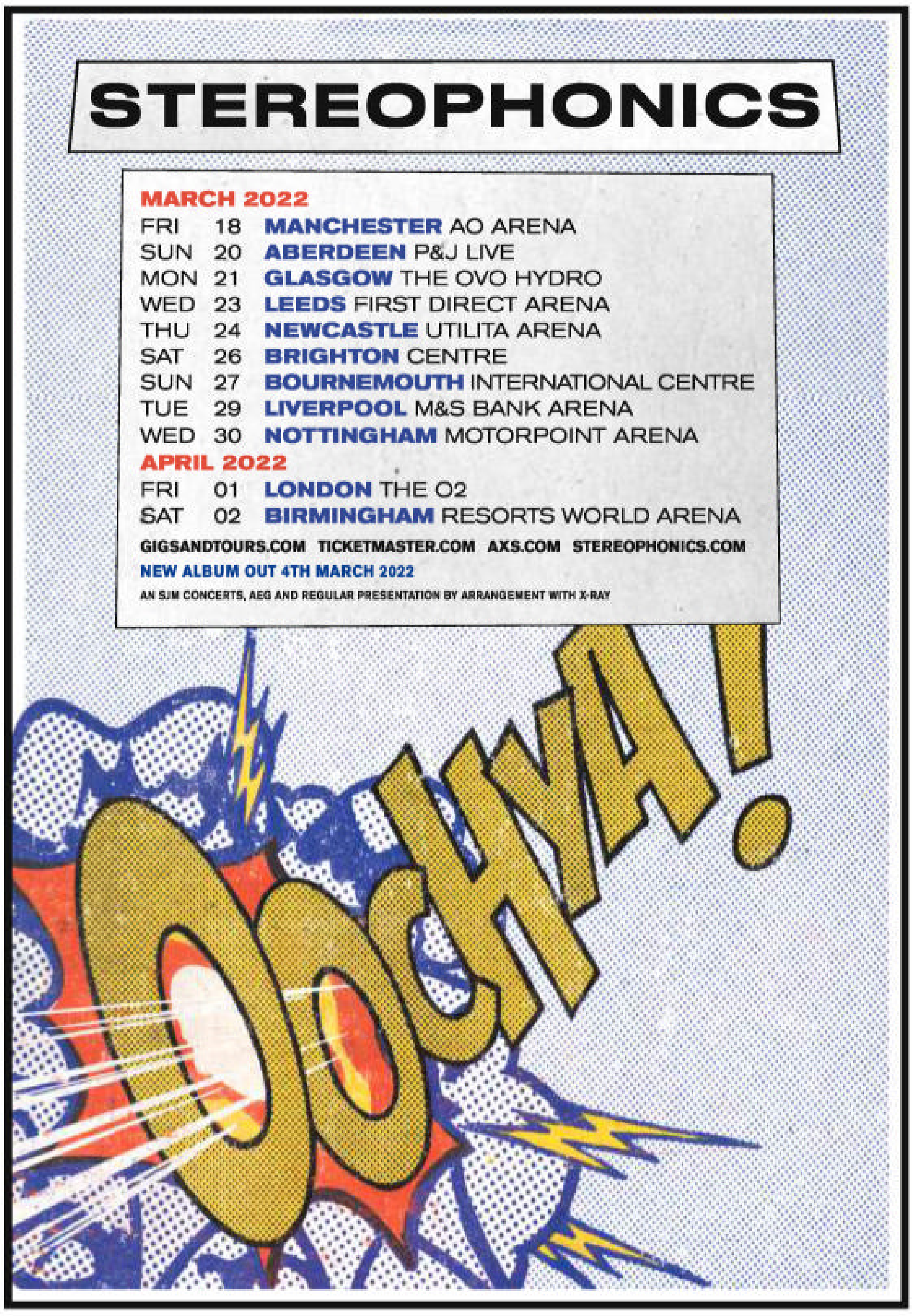
PHOTO BY PIP

THE NEW AUTOBIOGRAPHY **'I WANNA BE YOURS'** IS AVAILABLE NOW



STEREOPHONICS

MARCH 2022

FRI	18	**MANCHESTER** AO ARENA
SUN	20	**ABERDEEN** P&J LIVE
MON	21	**GLASGOW** THE OVO HYDRO
WED	23	**LEEDS** FIRST DIRECT ARENA
THU	24	**NEWCASTLE** UTILITA ARENA
SAT	26	**BRIGHTON** CENTRE
SUN	27	**BOURNEMOUTH** INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
TUE	29	**LIVERPOOL** M&S BANK ARENA
WED	30	**NOTTINGHAM** MOTORPOINT ARENA
APRIL 2022		
FRI	01	**LONDON** THE O2
SAT	02	**BIRMINGHAM** RESORTS WORLD ARENA

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NEW ALBUM OUT 4TH MARCH 2022

AN SJM CONCERTS, AEG AND REGULAR PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

MILES KANE

2022 UK TOUR

JAN 28 **MANCHESTER** ALBERT HALL
EXTRA DATE ADDED DUE TO DEMAND
JAN 29 **WARRINGTON** PARR HALL
JAN 31 **SHEFFIELD** THE LEADMILL
FEB 01 **LEEDS** O2 ACADEMY
FEB 03 **NEWCASTLE** O2 ACADEMY
FEB 04 **GLASGOW** O2 ACADEMY
FEB 05 **BIRMINGHAM** O2 INSTITUTE
FEB 07 **CARDIFF** THE TRAMSHED

FEB 08 **BRISTOL** O2 ACADEMY
FEB 10 **OXFORD** O2 ACADEMY
FEB 11 **SOUTHAMPTON** ENGINE ROOMS
FEB 12 **NORWICH** THE WATERFRONT
FEB 14 **CAMBRIDGE** JUNCTION
FEB 15 **NORTHAMPTON** ROADMENDERS
FEB 16 **LONDON** ROUNDHOUSE
FEB 18 **NOTTINGHAM** ROCK CITY
FEB 19 **LIVERPOOL** O2 ACADEMY

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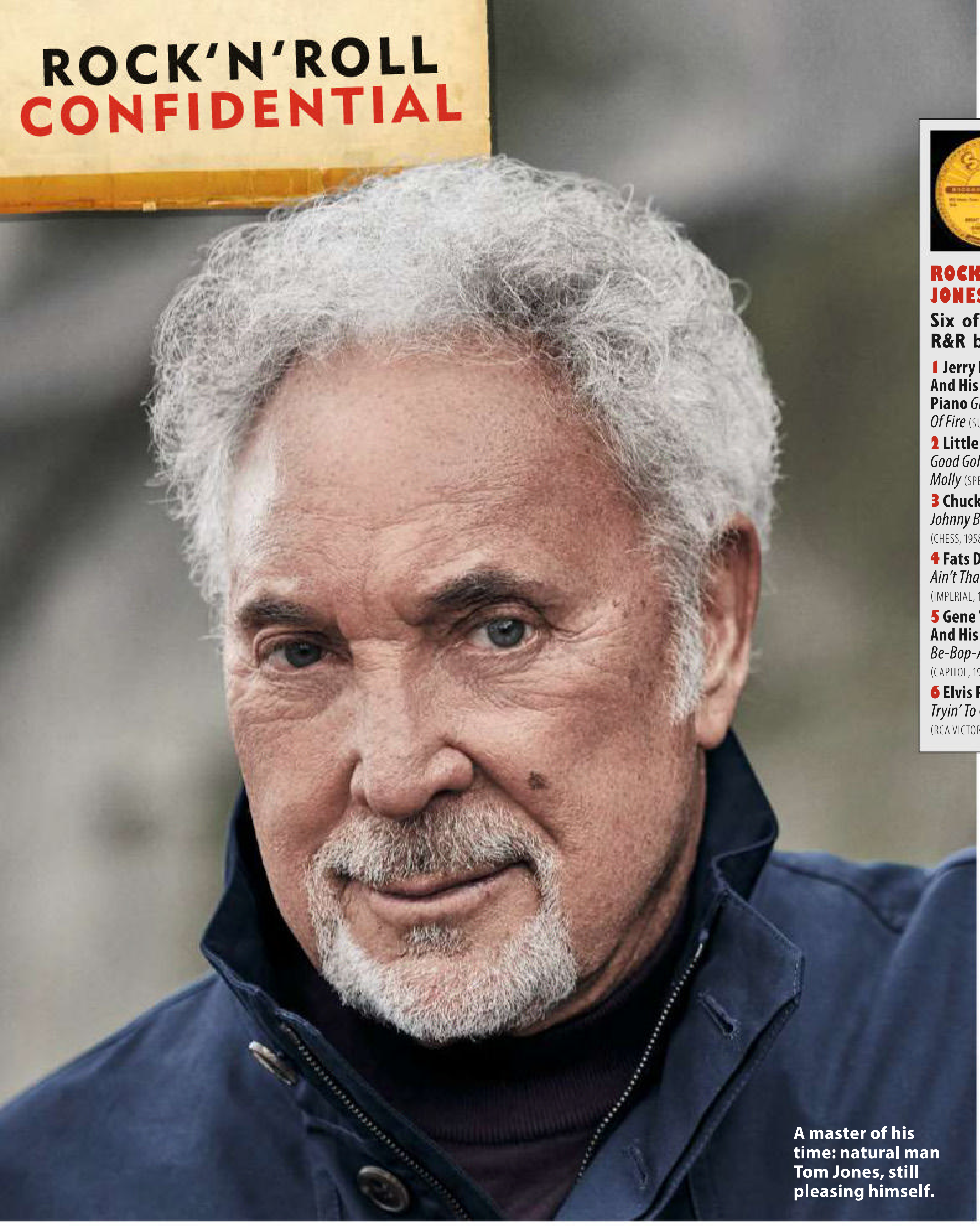
AN SM CONCERTS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH 13 ARTISTS



A master of his time: natural man Tom Jones, still pleasing himself.

TOM JONES

Treforest's giant-voiced methuselah talks Dylan, rock'n'roll and staying sane.

A still-active presence from the golden age of the great entertainers, Thomas Woodward had his head turned when he heard the American gospel versions of the hymns he'd sung as a kid in chapel in south Wales. Throughout his 57-years-and-counting recording career, that influence was augmented by the blues, R&B, ballad singing, rock'n'roll and country. His story of big hits, Bond themes, Vegas residencies and team-ups with Elvis, Janis Joplin, Jack White and innumerable others goes on, most recently with *Surrounded By Time*, his fourth covers album with producer Ethan Johns.

"I'm pleasing myself," explains the now-81-year-old of his modus operandi. "Hopefully people will go along with that, and understand that when I do something, I mean it."

Your cover of Dylan's Not Dark Yet for *Surrounded By Time*'s 'Hourglass Edition' sounds like La Düsseldorf.

My son Mark, who's co-producer on this album, knows I like Dylan, so he came up with this. It was his idea for the arrangement, because the Bob Dylan version of course is more like a ballad. I'm really singing it in the same pocket as Dylan put it, but the music is definitely different. It's not much of a departure for me, because Ethan Johns has produced it, but we really wanted this to sound different from what we've done previously.

Your range is remarkably undiminished. How have you kept your voice up?

Er… I don't know. It surprises me, honestly. I just think I've looked after it. You do when you get a little older – I was attacking stuff when I was young, everything was crash-bang-wallop. But you know, the voice itself is a God-given gift. You can do a lot of things, but you can't create it. It's a thing I'm just lucky to have, and still have. Thank God I still have the vocal ability to pick and choose and know what to do with a song.

> "Thank God I still have the vocal ability to know what to do with a song."
> **TOM JONES**

ROCKIN' JONES

Six of Tom's R&R best.

1 **Jerry Lee Lewis And His Pumping Piano** *Great Balls Of Fire* (SUN, 1957)
2 **Little Richard** *Good Golly, Miss Molly* (SPECIALTY, 1958)
3 **Chuck Berry** *Johnny B. Goode* (CHESS, 1958)
4 **Fats Domino** *Ain't That A Shame* (IMPERIAL, 1955)
5 **Gene Vincent And His Blue Caps** *Be-Bop-A-Lula* (CAPITOL, 1956)
6 **Elvis Presley** *Tryin' To Get To You* (RCA VICTOR, 1956)

What's the most outstanding memory of the super-fame of the '60s?

The most exciting time for me was when we were driving back from Bradford and we stopped at a transport café, had some sausage sandwiches, and read in the Sunday newspaper that It's Not Unusual was in the Top 20 [in February 1965]. I thought, "My God, that's it!" It's a clear picture in my mind, picking up the paper and going to these lorry drivers and saying, "See this, look, that's me!" and they go, "Yeah, right."

How do you manage to stay sane in the showbiz inferno?

I've been lucky to come from a good working-class background in south Wales. It means your values are very strong. And my marriage was always very solid, my wife backed me to the hilt. If you're going to go off the tracks after that, there's something wrong. You've got to look in the mirror and say, "Wait a minute, who am I?" And if you look in the mirror and be as true as possible to that person in there, then I think you can get on with it.

If you could pick any, which singer would you duet with?

I never got a chance to sing with Whitney Houston, and I would have loved to have sung with Amy Winehouse. But most of the people that I grew up listening to, I got a chance to sing with them, because I had a TV show in the late '60s, early '70s, and I got a lot of my heroes on the TV, like Jerry Lee Lewis and Little Richard and Ray Charles. Those people that I listened to, and there I was singing with them. I never sang with Frank Sinatra though, which would have been nice.

You've mentioned an album of Dylan interpretations.

I would love to do that. I mean, the wealth of material there. I had the thumbs up from Bob himself when I did a song called What Good Am I?. He had me on MusiCares [in 2015]. I'm anxious to know what he would think of Not Dark Yet. And I've got a live album that we haven't put out yet – I did a rock'n'roll song every night on my tour in 2019. That's my go-to thing.

Tell us something you've never told an interviewer before.

That's impossible. I'm as open as a book because I'm a natural person. I don't think there's anything that I haven't talked about before. I've loved what I've done, so it's hard for me to stop talking sometimes. Let's say – I walk for about an hour if I can, in the day. And there's a gym in the building that I'm in. So I try to work out, to do something every day.

As told to Ian Harrison

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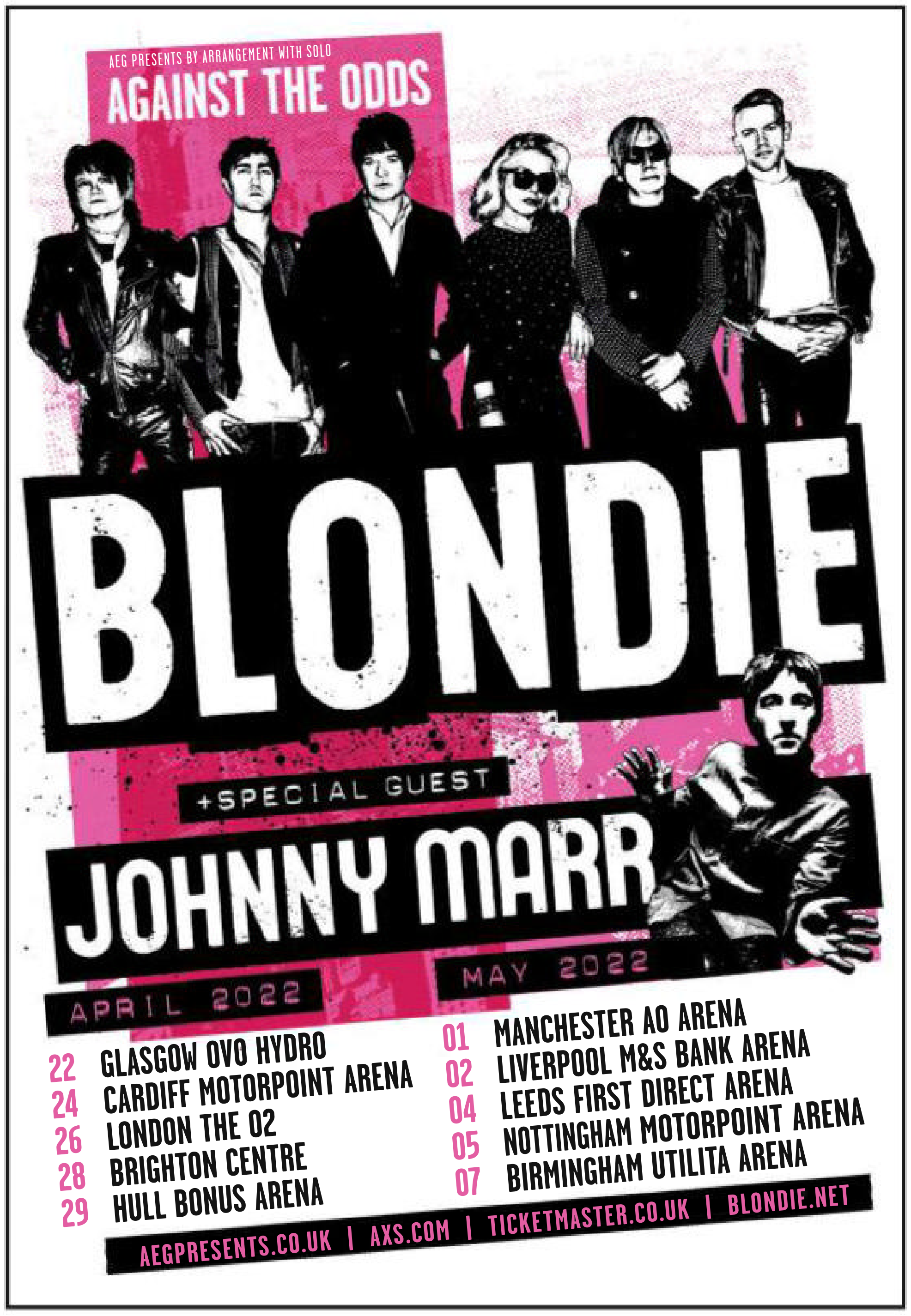

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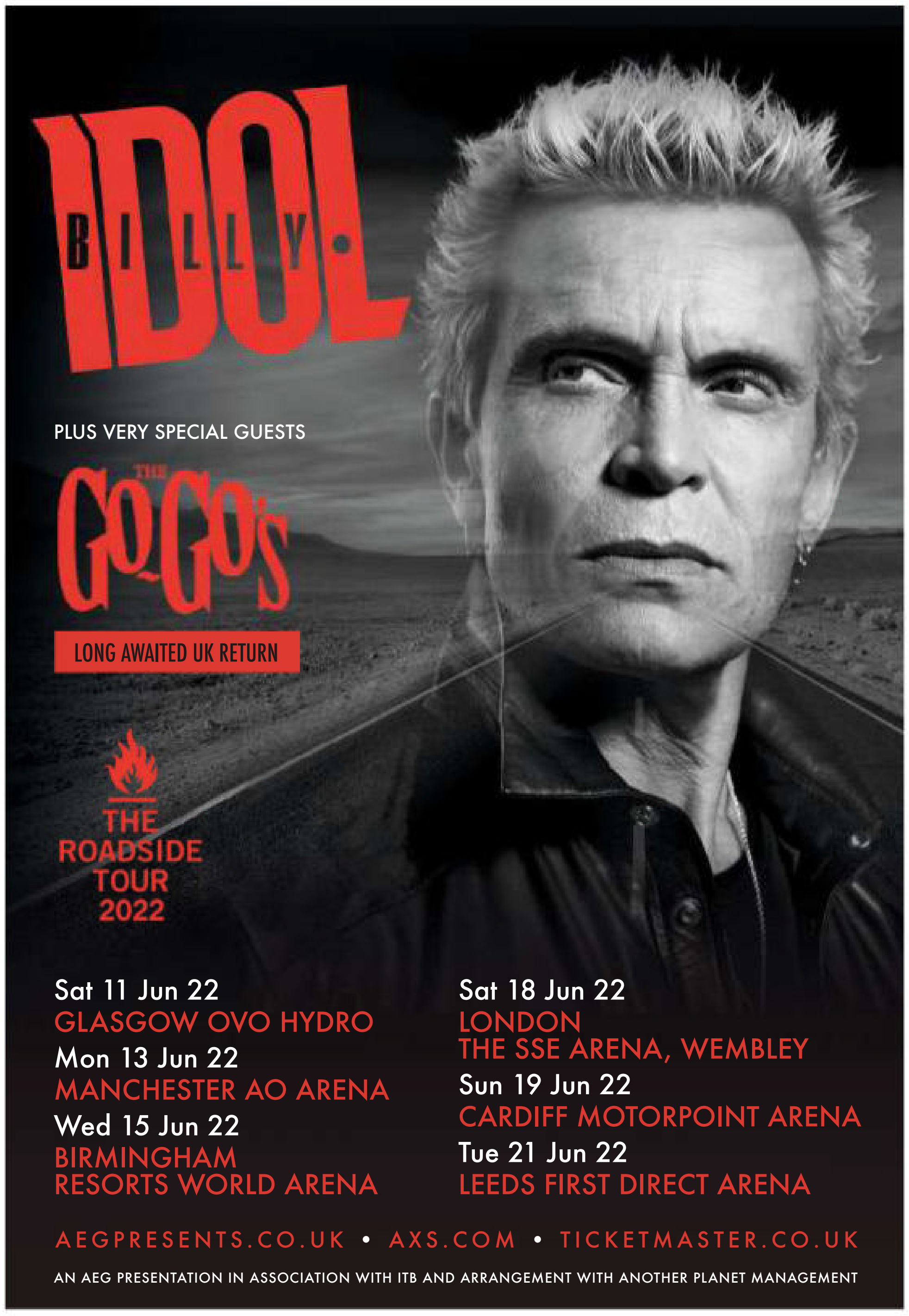

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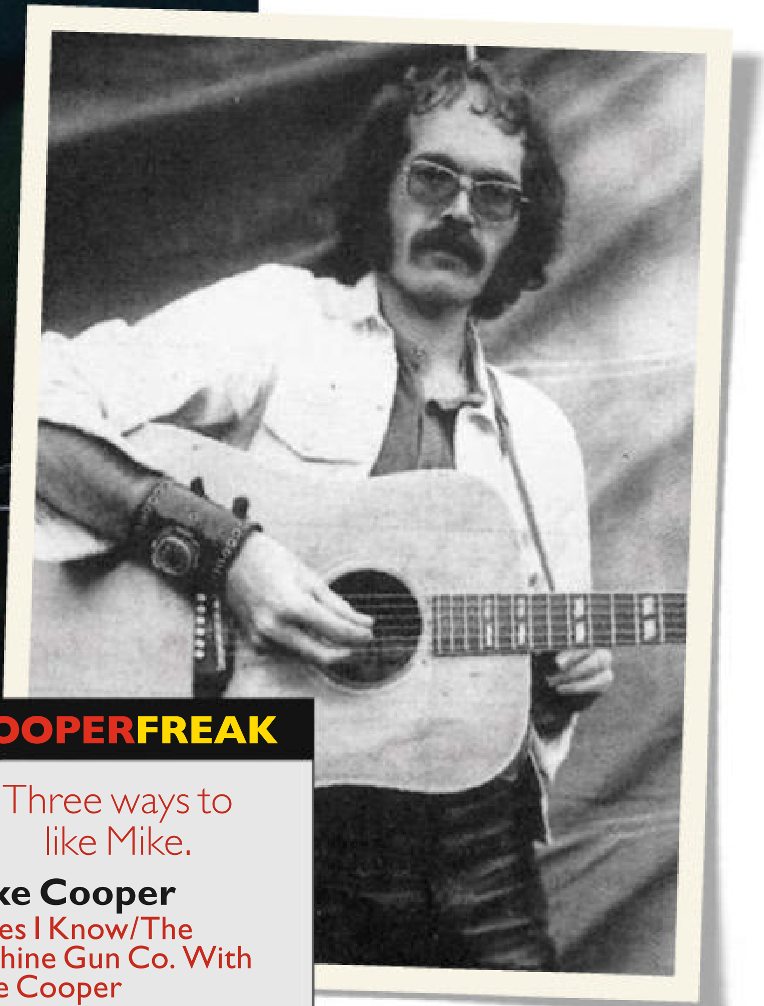

Slide away: Mike Cooper (right and below), on the move musically for half a century.

HELLO AGAIN, FOLK-IMPROV EMINENCE/ LAP-STEEL HERO MIKE COOPER

MIKE COOPER was never very good at painting swimming pools, anyway. In the mid-'70s, when he was in temporary exile from the fringes of the English folk rock wellspring, the task became one of several odd jobs he had while living with an artist friend in southern Spain. He lost the gig when he splashed the rubbery liquid that lined the pool over its sides, marring the stones above. All the same: Cooper has forever been fine being in flux.

"I've always had a curious mind so that's what it was all about – going somewhere new, doing something different, eating something different," says Cooper, who was born in Reading and turns 80 next year. "Keep moving. Don't become a target."

Beginning with 1969's *Oh Really!?*, Cooper cut five albums for Pye and its subsidiary Dawn, which launched the likes of Mungo Jerry and Comus. Yet he began to realise not only that he might not become a singing-and-songwriting star, but that he didn't want to be one (although he *had* once been asked to be a Rolling Stone, something he no longer discusses). The subtle wildness of The Machine Gun Co., backing band for his final Dawn records, had shown him an alternate path. "Those albums were the laboratory for me," Cooper says. "They turned my head to what music was all about – improvisation. I knew I wasn't going to be writing fixed songs for the rest of my life."

When he returned to England after those stints abroad near the decade's end, Cooper fell in league with the London Musicians Collective, a consortium that brandished improvisation like a weapon. In 1982, he started The Recedents alongside late saxophonist/iconoclast Lol Coxhill. "If you were standing on the edge of that pool with Lol, he would push you in," Cooper says, laughing. "He would never let you drown."

Though he left London again, Cooper took these lessons with him to his longtime home in Rome and current base on the Balearic Sea, plus many trips throughout the Pacific Islands. For 40 years, his catalogue has unfurled as a fascinating patchwork of field recordings and free jazz, extemporaneous vocals and exotic influences.

The lap-steel guitar has been his steadfast companion, allowing him to move from gentle oceanic hymns to gnarled outsider blues, from collaborations with Steve Gunn to The Necks' Chris Abrahams. Recorded with several saxophonists and fellow traveller Viv Corringham, the new *Oceans Of Milk And Treacle* feels like a summary for his stuffed discography, the audio passport of someone who long ago vowed to never sit still.

"When I was playing solo, I was bored stiff," he says. "How does someone like Paul Simon get up and sing whatever he sings every night? I was always going to do something different, so at least I wouldn't be bored."

Grayson Haver Currin

Oceans Of Milk And Treacle is out on January 14 on Room40

> "I've always had a curious mind."
> **MIKE COOPER**

COOPERFREAK

Three ways to like Mike.

Mike Cooper
Places I Know/The Machine Gun Co. With Mike Cooper
(DAWN 1971/1972; REISSUE PARADISE OF BACHELORS, 2014)

Released as a double-LP four decades after Cooper hoped, these crackling country-rockers, hillside paeans and heartsick ballads yield to ecstatic weirdness. So Glad (That I Found You) does it all in 15 minutes.

Mike Cooper
Rayon Hula
(HIPSHOT, 2004)

Cooper's 21st-century reappraisal of the pop exotica that stemmed from the States' mainland obsession with Hawaii, this languorous masterpiece suggests the tiki-bar jukebox left running on some deserted tropical island, now haunted.

Mike Cooper
40 Nights And 40 Days
(SELF-RELEASED, 2020)

Dedicated to revolutionary Spanish Civil War photographers and recorded during lockdown, these four long-form improvisations are splenetic and hypnotic, advancing like a mighty front aware of the peril it faces.

Vajk Dudas, Antonia Tricarico

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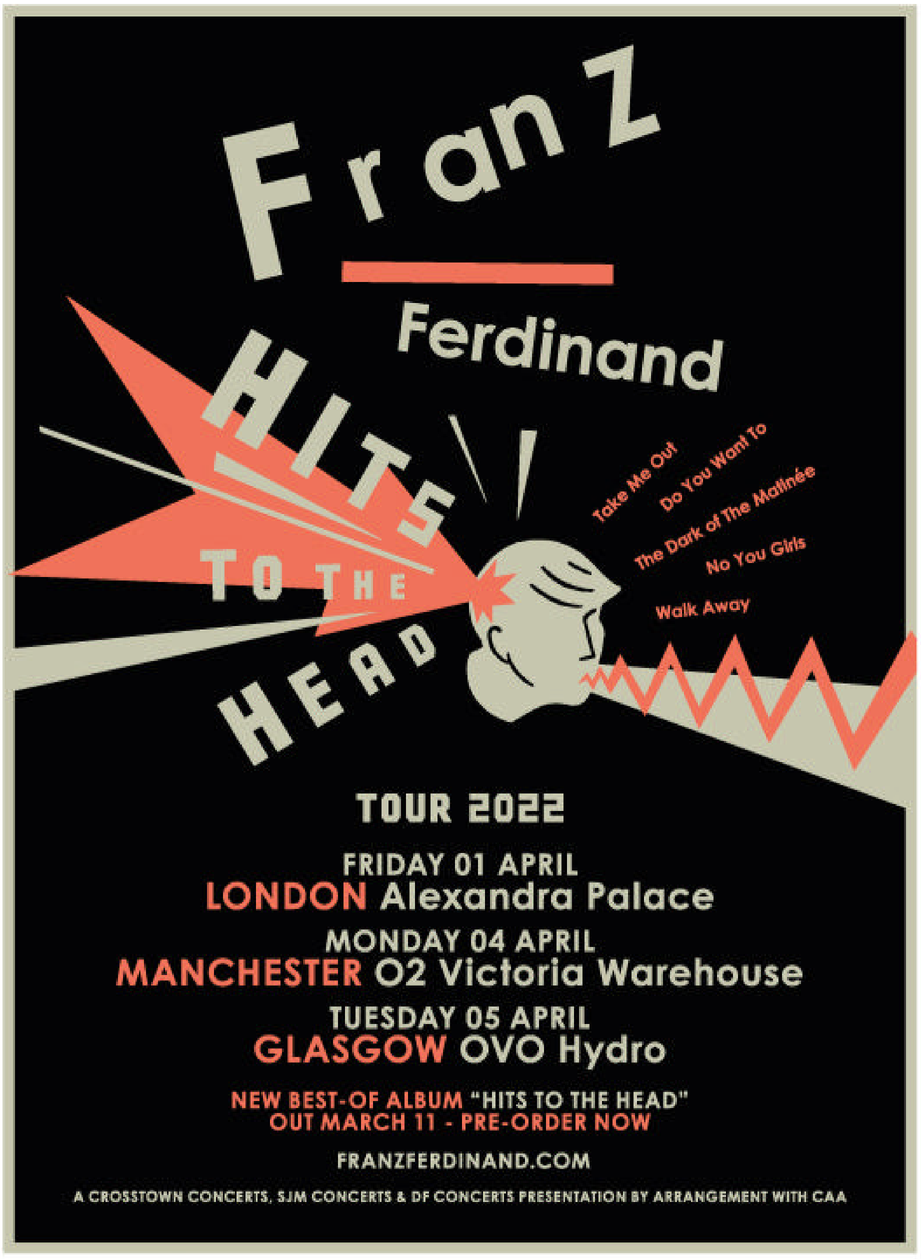

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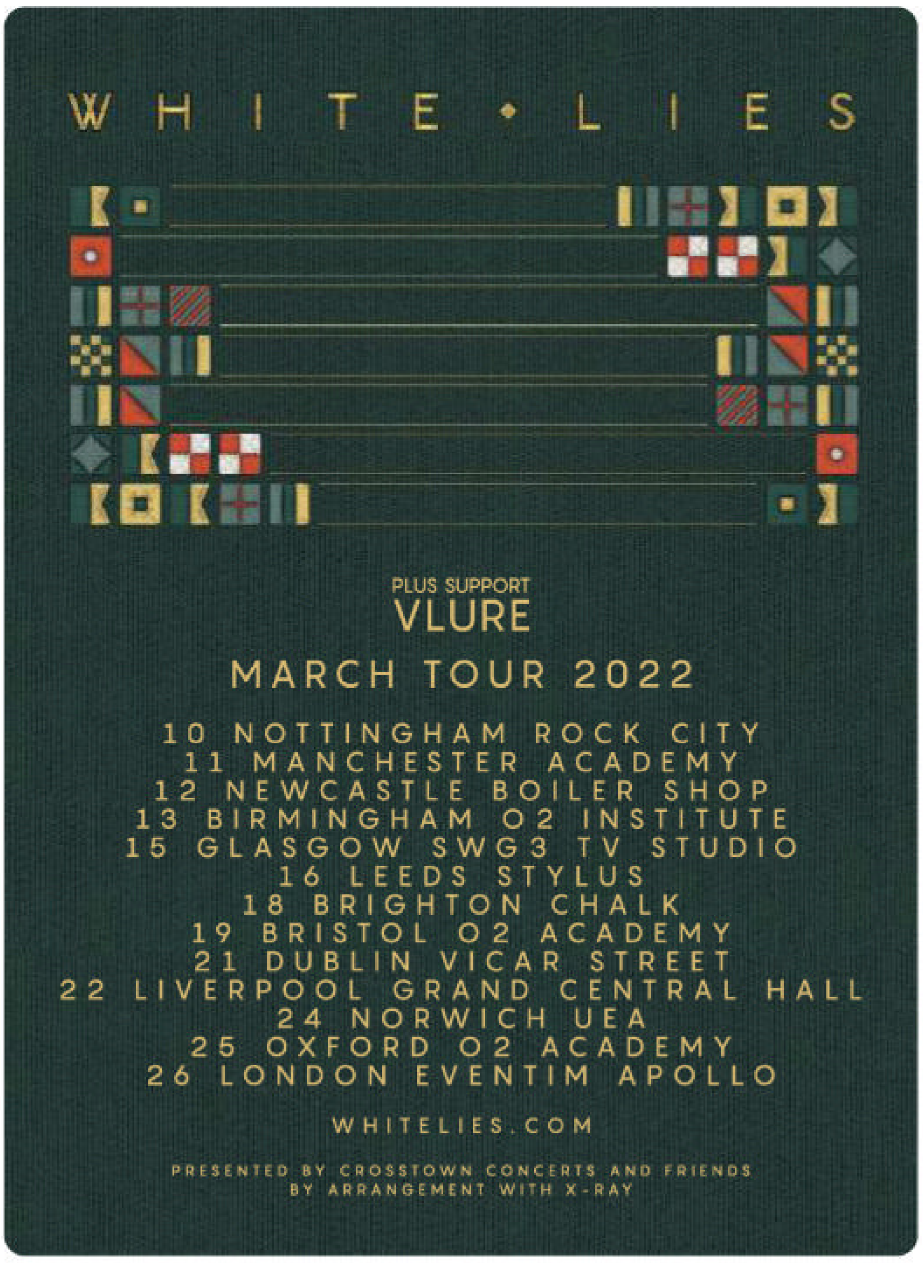

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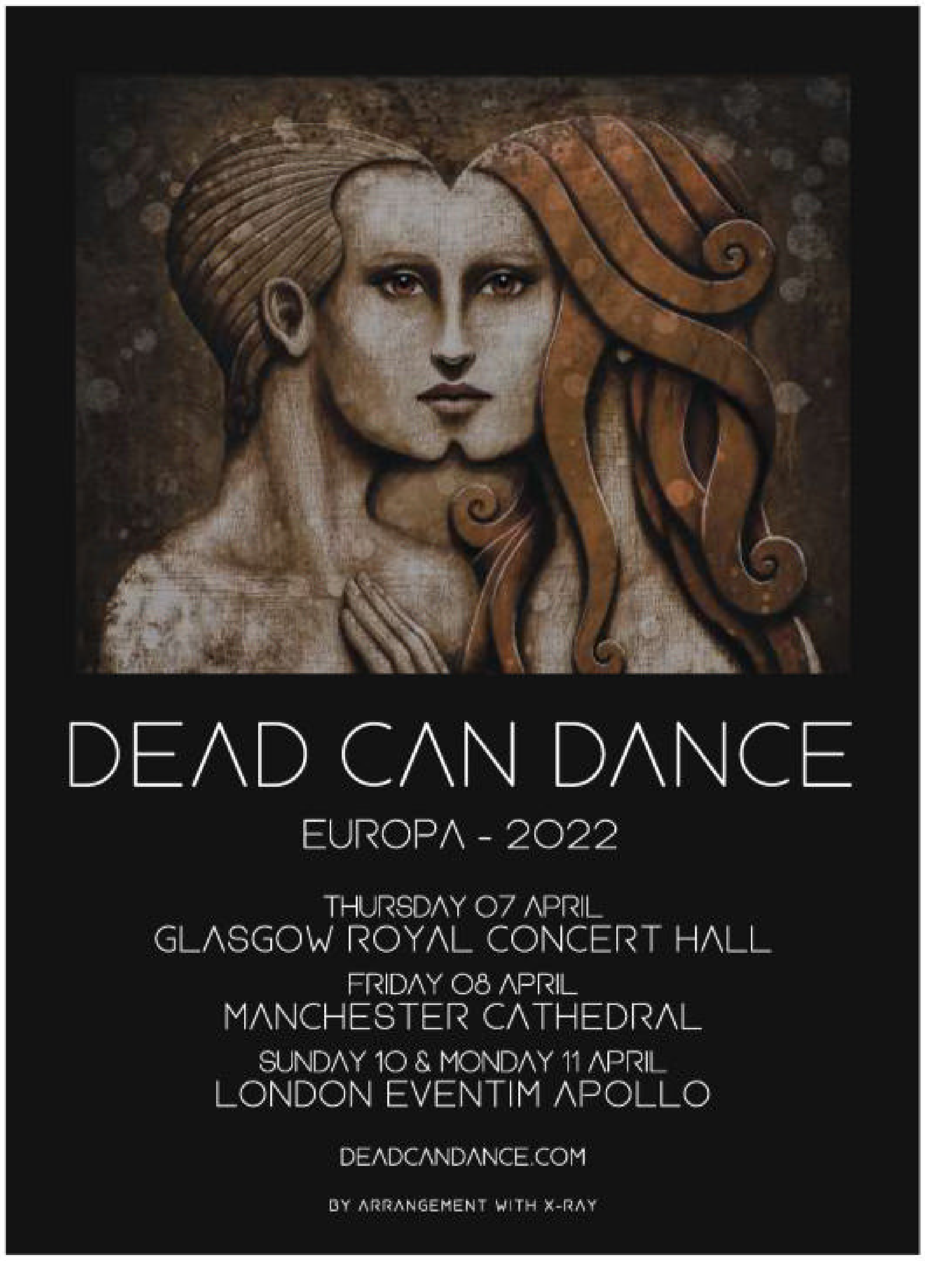

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Knee deep in dust: bluegrass method man Billy Strings.

> “These Bluegrass Boys were *thugs*, they looked fucking gangsta.”
> **BILLY STRINGS**

MEET BILLY STRINGS, THE BLUEGRASS REVOLUTIONARY WHO SINGS “ABOUT METH, NOT MINING”.

IF IT’S 10am in Pittsburgh, then it must be breakfast bong o’clock. Tousle-haired bluegrass sensation Billy Strings lights a cone, coughs a first-of-the-day cough, and tells MOJO all about his childhood growing up in a crack house.

Strings’ father William died of a heroin overdose when Billy Jr was two, he smoked his first joint – stolen off his grandad – when he was eight, and the first time he tried crack was with his mother, Debra. Debra and his stepdad Terry, a fine guitarist, liked to party and in the tiny rural town of Muir, Michigan, the party was usually at their house.

“I grew up with tweakers crashing on the couch and getting hauled off by police the next morning,” the 29-year-old says without judgement. But he also grew up playing guitar to get attention and respect from his parents, picking to anything on the radio and learning bluegrass from Terry. It was around a campfire that the then-William Apostol was dubbed Billy Strings by an honorary aunt.

“I was maybe 10, sitting on a cooler at the fire, playing with the others, she just looked over and went, ‘Well look at Billy Strings’. When I started playing open mike nights I thought I needed a stage name to put on the blackboard. Didn’t occur to me Billy Apostol was already a pretty good stage name.”

As a teenager, the family’s lifestyle swallowed him too – “Heroin, crack, pills, I didn’t really care” – with a dead end of couch surfing, truancy and drugs the keynotes to his likely short life. Encouraged by a schoolfriend’s mother, he got out and eventually landed in Nashville.

Other than his astonishing, breakneck playing, Strings’ reputation rests on his willingness to undermine bluegrass traditions. Hence songs’ Black Sabbath-style riffs and pop structures, and a collaboration with OTT hip-hopper RMR . But his true subversion is more subtle. For instance, Dust In A Baggie, about a friend who got 20 years for meth possession, sounds traditional, but it’s a very modern parable.

“I’m not a miner’s son and my family don’t come from West Virginia. Sorry, but they’re tweakers from Michigan so I’ll sing about meth, not mining.”

Renewal, the follow-up to his Grammy-winning second album *Home*, continues to evolve the recently-betrothed Strings’ music with a new tenderness and optimism. Where he previously sang of living in extreme jeopardy, now he’s looking forward. As an extension of his new-found purview, Strings returned to his old elementary school in Muir recently and gifted a guitar to every pupil, his first step towards a possible future charitable foundation.

“Y’know,” he says, sucking in a final cone, “if one of those guitars helps just one of those kids get out from the kind of cloud I was under, then that’s redemption right there.”

Andy Fyfe

FACT SHEET

- For Fans Of: Bill Monroe, Chris Hillman, Steve Earle
- His real surname is seldom spelled correctly. Even his old school spelled it “Apostle” on the plaque they put up to commemorate his recent celebrity visit. He’s decided he can’t be bothered correcting them.
- He’s best mates with rapper Post Malone. They bonded over a mutual love of Hank Williams.
- Strings fell in love with bluegrass after watching an old TV clip of Bill Monroe And The Bluegrass Boys. “They had big Stetsons tipped to the side, gold-plated banjos, huge belt buckles, beautiful rhinestone suits… man, these guys were *thugs*, they looked fucking gangsta.”

KEY TRACKS

- Dust In A Baggie
- Know It All
- Wargasm (featuring RMR)

Jesse Faatz

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RISING BLUES STAR CHRISTONE 'KINGFISH' INGRAM SAYS YESTERDAY MISSISSIPPI, TOMORROW THE WORLD

RIGHT NOW, Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram is the most explosive new talent in the blues. He speaks through his guitar in long, subtle, articulate lines and delivers his songs with grace and conviction. These are skills most musicians take years to acquire. Ingram is 22.

What distances him from other guitar-strutting 20-somethings on the blues stage is that he knows in his bones where it comes from – its unique geography of place and connection.

Ingram is from Clarksdale, Mississippi, where Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Otis Spann and Ike Turner lived, and Bessie Smith died. Today, it's the home of legendary blues club Ground Zero and the Delta Blues Museum, a few miles from the crossed-guitars landmark marking the intersection of "blues highways" 49 and 61. The blues hangs over the town like smoke over a barbecue.

"I've always been around it," Ingram says. "The meat and potatoes of everything in Clarksdale is the blues." As he says in one of his songs, he's "too young to remember" the town's past – "but I'm old enough to know." While other kids at school were absorbed by hip-hop, he was listening further back. "I was into rap," he says, "but not like they were. Anything that I listened to was old – nine times out of 10 it was someone who had passed on."

Old blues, old soul – and Ingram was teaching himself to become one. In another song he muses: "I've always been different, that's one thing that's for sure/I can still hear grandma saying, 'Child, you been here before.'"

"I wanted to have a career in music since age three, but me fronting my own blues band, that wasn't even in my goals," he says. "But I realised that was set in stone when I played my first couple of shows at the Delta Blues Museum, when I was 10 or 11."

Still in his teens when he went on the road, he cut his first LP, *Kingfish*, for Alligator in 2019, and followed it two years later with *662* (Clarksdale's telephone area code), both close collaborations with songwriter and producer Tom Hambridge, both incandescent displays of mature blues skill.

Blues is about storytelling, and Ingram's central story is his own: how he comes to be where he is now, starting where he started from.

"I'm not just using the blues as a stepping-stone," he explains. "I want to see other young black kids get into this genre of music. And in order to get young people, you have to venture out just a little bit. There's other stuff that I could do, but it'll always be rooted in the blues. Because I come from Clarksdale and I'll always have that in me."

Tony Russell

Ingram plays Celtic Connections, Glasgow, on January 25 and Islington Assembly Hall, London, on January 27.

> "The meat and potatoes of everything in Clarksdale is the blues."
> CHRISTONE 'KINGFISH' INGRAM

FACT SHEET

- For Fans Of: Buddy Guy, B.B. King, Jimi Hendrix.
- Ingram was given his nickname 'Kingfish' by veteran Mississippi hill country bluesman Bill 'Howl-N-Madd' Perry.
- Ingram's debut album *Kingfish* featured cameos by Buddy Guy and Keb' Mo'. Other early supporters were Elton John and Bootsy Collins, who spread the word about the young man's YouTube videos and commented, "thank God that music ain't gone away". More recently, the two have recorded together.

KEY TRACKS

- Believe These Blues
- Love Ain't My Favorite Word
- Another Life Goes By

Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram: the 22-year-old displays his mature blues skill.

Justin Hardiman, Getty

MOJO PLAYLIST

Plug in, for avant-jamming, opiated pop and Yuletide twang!

1 BILLY F GIBBONS JINGLE BELL BLUES

The open sleigh fave re-tooled as a slow blues for hot rods. Come for the egg nog and bells, stay for the chef's kiss molten licks.
Find it: *Concord red vinyl 7"/streaming services*

2 BINKER & MOSES FEED INFINITE

The sax-and-drum team join bassist-turned-electronica man Max Luthert on this super-cool updraft of ambient-spiritual jazz. Like flying over tundra, in a dream.
Find it: *streaming services*

3 ANDREW SCOTT YOUNG/ RYAN JEWELL/RYLEY WALKER ALLEGRO

Walker and his regular rhythm section, tongues in cheeks, launch a new avant-jam band genre, *Post Wook*. And there's a twist – the music's great.
Find it: *Bandcamp*

4 NICK CAVE & WARREN ELLIS WE ARE NOT ALONE

A sombre, gorgeous new Cave classic, on the soundtrack for a doc about snow leopards. Anyone alienated by the duo's electronic tendencies will find its orchestral lushness a balm.
Find it: YouTube

5 WU-LU BROKEN HOMES

A taster from a promised 2022 LP on Warp, this is the band's best stab yet at their wild, gnarly live mix of dub, noise, opiated pop and street poetry. Think AR Kane for 2022.
Find it: *streaming services*

6 THE BUG & JASON WILLIAMSON STOAT

The Bug's dirty ragga techno with scraping strings meets Sleaford Mods' arch-rebuker on 10 cans of Kong Strong, going loopily zoomorphic down a paranoid pothole.
Find it: *SoundCloud*

7 JEFF PARKER LA JETÉE

Guitarist ne plus ultra of the Chicago post-rock/jazz scene, Parker revisits, solo, one of his '90s Tortoise masterpieces (it's Jetty, from *TNT*).
Find it: *Bandcamp*

8 SOUL REVIVERS FT. ERNEST RANGLIN HARDER

The veteran reggae guitar master plays it light yet deep on this jazz-reggae excursion into no-time. From team-ups LP *On The Grove*.
Find it: *Bandcamp*

9 SARAH BROWN I'M ON MY WAY

From a 2022 tribute to Mahalia Jackson, Brown (Simple Minds, Pink Floyd) pairs her skywards vocal to brisk soul-gospel. Joyous.
Find it: *streaming services*

10 MARTIN CARR FLAMES

Former Boo Radley heralds new Bandcamp subscription service with a meld of glassy pop and fuzzy cut-ups: Animal Collective, meet China Crisis.
Find it: *streaming services*

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THE MOJO INTERVIEW

Surviving **the car crash of the Sex Pistols**, then a car crash with **The Professionals**, punk's percussion pathfinder **remains sanguine**, albeit wise to his (ahem) **public image.** "People **don't let you grow up** from being a Pistol," says **Paul Cook**.

Interview by **PAT GILBERT** • Portrait by **ANDREW COTTERILL**

THERE IS VERY LITTLE THAT'S OUTWARDLY seditious about the gleaming bar area of the Hilton hotel in Islington, north London, especially on a quiet Sunday lunchtime. But seated at a corner table is a man once considered so dangerous to society he would be regularly attacked in the street. Today, Paul Cook – slim-built, stylishly dressed in dark jeans, black corduroy jacket and sage-green neckerchief – looks unlikely to spark a ruck. But the expectations that come with being a former member of the world's most notorious band can still prove an unwanted burden.

"I was round a mate's house and he'd put this spread on," chuckles Cook, now 65, raspily. "He said this bizarre thing: 'Fucking hell – a Sex Pistol eating olives! I never thought I'd see the day…' I thought, Where are you coming from with this?! People don't let you grow up and out from being a Pistol."

Often tagged the 'quiet' Pistol, and rarely interviewed (now as then) at length, Cook's contribution to the group was nevertheless immeasurable. Manifestly, he kept the beat with an economy and precision that invested the Pistols' music with uncommon power and punch, abetted by an almost telepathic relationship with guitarist Steve Jones. But he and Jones – literally thick-as-thieves since their early teens in Hammersmith, west London – also brought a whiff of genuine villainy to the Pistols: even their 'Cook'n'Jones' sobriquet had the ring of a couple of rough-diamond Jack-the-lads from an episode of The Sweeney.

Yet while in the early '70s Jones pursued a full-time career as a house-breaker, amassing the proto-Sex Pistols' backline in the process, the drummer worked as an apprentice electrician at Watney's Stag brewery in Mortlake. Genial and straight-talking, 'Cookie' became renowned as the Pistols' "peacemaker" – his words – capable of keeping a volatile team working in something like concert. But as recent events have underlined – in August, Cook and Jones won a High Court battle with singer John Lydon to allow the group's music to be used in Danny Boyle's upcoming Disney miniseries, Pistol – internal conflict has been more the rule than the exception.

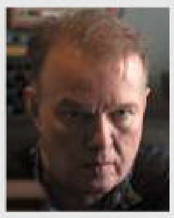
This evening, Cook will play a show at the nearby Garage venue to promote *SNAFU*, the new album by The Professionals, the post-Pistols group he's revived in recent years. But for now, he's ready to open up – with much saintly forbearance and comic burying-of-head-in-hands – about a drama-crammed life that's also included stints with '80s rock-rappers Chiefs Of Relief, Vic Godard and Edwyn Collins, and being father to pop singer Hollie Cook. He'll even, unexpectedly, reveal a late-era Charlie Watts-style dalliance with the dark stuff.

"John, Glen and Steve have all done their books, so it's good to remind people there was also a drummer in the Sex Pistols," he ➢

Getty

WE'RE NOT WORTHY

Edwyn Collins pays homage to a "loyal friend".



"Paul doesn't chatter. He means everything he says and he never lies. He is deadly funny but he never fakes jollity. He is a loyal friend. I knew Paul's dad, Tom, and you knew that Paul had a very good Hammersmith upbringing. The Cooks – Paul, Jeni and Hollie – are all out of the top drawer."

smiles. "I've never really told my side of the story…"

Starting with recent events: how important was your winning the High Court case against John Lydon?

I thought it was time to stand up for ourselves and stop being bullied, basically. We signed an agreement a long time ago that "the majority rules", and it's important to me that people adhere to that agreement and not just tear it up when it suits them. So, sadly, it ended up in a horrible Ikea-style court room, being grilled by some toff in a wig. I'm glad we won, and I hope we can move on and build bridges with John in the future. I was a bit pissed off that Steve didn't man up and come over [from LA, for the hearing] but Steve and I will always make up. As you know, we go back a long way.

I read an interview where you said that until you read his book, Lonely Boy, you hadn't realised the extent of the sexual abuse Steve suffered at home, or the depths of his drug addiction.

Me and Steve have always had this brotherly relationship… But… it was a weird one. He never opened up to me about all that, even later on, though I knew it was happening. He really was 'a lonely boy', he kept himself to himself. We talked about it a bit more as we got older. But the book was like (*covers eyes*), "No more, no more!" and then on the next page it gets even worse.

Was yours, in contrast, a happy childhood?

Yeah, I think me – and Glen [Matlock] – had quite stable backgrounds. It was a solid working-class family. Dad was a carpenter/joiner, mum was a housewife. And I always had a great love for music and fashion from a young age.

Did that come from your parents?

No, not at all. They were really old-school. It came from my older sister and her boyfriend, really. I was really into the early ska stuff, soul music, Motown. There was a big West Indian community in our area. Then I graduated via the older kids down the block to The Kinks, The Who, Hendrix. We were lucky that we had the Hammersmith Odeon down the road. All the Motown bands came over to play. The Four Tops, Stevie Wonder, The Temptations, they were the first people I saw.

Did you fantasise about being famous as a kid?

Not until we sat down with Wally [Nightingale, proto-Pistols guitarist in 1972/73] and decided to form a band. After that, it was, "This is what I want…" Before that it was football. I was quite good – even if I say so myself.

It feeds into Pistols mythology that the group began life with all this gear stolen from Ronnie Wood, Rod Stewart, David Bowie. Did you feel empowered by that?

"…Comes out better on a stolen guitar", as Ziggy said. It was done out of necessity. Steve was the Dickensian street kid, a burglar. He's not proud of it these days. I was the straight-goer with the regular job. While I was at work at the brewery, he'd be out nicking stuff…

Were you an accomplice?

Not so much. But he did lead me astray a few times. When we stole a van full of gear? Yes, the police came knocking on the door at five o'clock in the morning… it was a crazy time. Steve was staying with us, because he didn't want to go home, because of the situation there. My parents put up with it, God bless 'em.

Your mum was interviewed for Fred and Judy Vermorel's 1978 book, Sex Pistols. She came across as very supportive of the band.

She was. During the punks v Teds time, I remember her chasing some Teds down the road when they'd given me a dirty look. Screaming and shouting at them!

You began frequenting Malcolm McLaren's shop – then Let It Rock, later Sex – on the King's Road. What was the allure of a place like that to you and Steve?

Malcolm was selling all the rock'n'roll stuff, which was interesting. Everywhere else was still selling platform boots and flares. Malcolm and Vivienne [Westwood] would let us hang out there – they were interested in where we came from, what we were doing. We thought we'd arrived, these kids from Hammersmith hanging out in Chelsea. Then it turned out the guy who worked in the shop on Saturdays [Glen Matlock] played bass… Looking back, the stars were so aligned. But we had to get rid of poor Wally. He was one of these pain-in-the-arse guitarists. Then, hey presto, John started coming into the shop.

Were tensions immediately evident between him and Glen and Steve?

It was fine to start with. We had a good unit, someone from a trendy King's Road shop wanted to manage us, what could possibly go wrong? John always had an edge, but that was what was great about him. If he wanted to say something, he would. But, yeah, there were tensions. I don't think Steve was very enamoured with him from the start. But I used to get on with him well, we'd go out for a drink together and so on.

Were you surprised the Pistols took off so quickly? You'd only had Rotten in the ranks for a year or so before you signed to EMI…

It was beyond our wildest dreams. But we understood where we came from. We were totally in touch with what the kids wanted. People think we came along and, y'know, "They were lucky!" but we were all very grounded in our subcultures and heritage. We knew we could shake things up a bit. I still don't think we get enough credit for that. People still think Malcolm put us together and told us what to do. It's total bullshit.

A LIFE IN PICTURES

The Cook report: a Pistol's shots.

1 Blond ambition: "I always had a great love for music from a young age." Paul's first school photograph, aged six.

2 With Steve Jones (left) in proto-Pistols band The Strand, circa 1974.

3 "We were totally in touch with what the kids wanted": the Sex Pistols, 1976, (from left) Glen Matlock, Johnny Rotten, Steve Jones, Cook.

4 On the dotted…: the band (with manager Malcolm McLaren, far right) sign their A&M record deal outside Buckingham Palace, March 10, 1977. Moments earlier Cook had a fight with Sid Vicious (third right) in the limo taking them there. "That was funny," remembers Paul.

5 "Beer, anyone?": the re-formed Sex Pistols announce the Filthy Lucre Tour at London's 100 Club, March 18, 1996.

6 Touring the world with "tough cookie" Edwyn Collins (second right), 1995.

7 He bangs the drums: Cook leads The Professionals from the back, October 2021.

8 We are family: (from left) Jeni, Hollie and Paul Cook in 2012.

9 Cook in September 1976: "We knew we could shake things up a bit."

Courtesy of Paul Cook (3), Barry Plummer, Shutterstock (2), Andrew Cotterill, Getty, Camera Press/Heilemann

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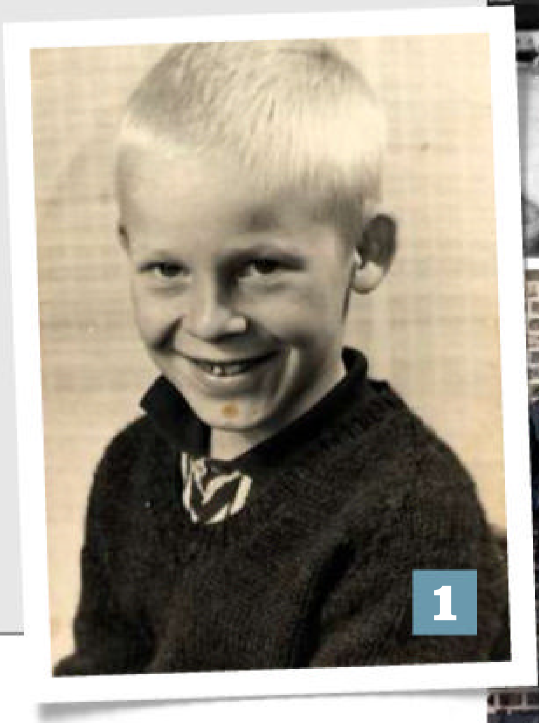
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You became infamous overnight in December 1976 after the Bill Grundy interview. Was it strange waking up to find yourself front-page news?

Yes, the world was very different after that. Maybe for the worse. We were still developing as a band. Think about it now – being 20-year-old kids, trying to make music and get on in a band. OK, you've got an attitude and think you're the bollocks, but to wake up to that… How do you deal with it? We managed to for a while. But it was bloody stressful a lot of the time. We just wanted to make music and people wanted to kill us!

Around the time of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations in June 1977, when the Pistols released God Save The Queen, you were attacked with a metal bar.

I was with my girlfriend. These Teds came up – I can remember the exact words – "What you wearing our fucking shoes for?" I had a pair of brothel creepers on. I was like, "What's it to you? Blah blah…" They went off, then came back with a metal bar. Bish-bosh-bash! Four of them. With all the street parties and bunting, people must have thought we were fucking mad releasing that song. We didn't realise how shocking it was at the time. It's only now, when I reflect on it today, in my quieter moments… But we all got through it – except poor Sid, of course.

What did you make of Sid Vicious joining the band?

I liked him. John was falling out with Glen at the time, I'm not sure why, because he went to grammar school or something (*raises an ironic eyebrow*). Me and Steve were stuck in the middle. We came back from holiday [in February 1977] and it was like, "Sid's joining the band." Oh god (*puts head in hands*). He couldn't play a note, Steve had to teach him. We didn't get on straight away, I must admit. He came in with completely the wrong attitude, totally over-the-top. As if things weren't chaotic enough at the time...

You had a fight with him in the back of the limo on the way to signing with A&M outside Buckingham Palace…

Yes, as you do (*laughs*). That was funny, everyone falling out of the car with black eyes and aching arms. But when we played the Swedish tour [in July 1977] I bonded with him. We got on all right after that. John wanted to get Sid in as his soul partner, as he was feeling a bit lonely, as me and Steve were mates. But almost as soon as he joined, John fell out with him. I thought (*sighs*), "Fucking great…"

> "People still think **Malcolm put us together** and told us what to do. **It's total bullshit."**

Did Vicious's arrival ruin the band?

It was the pinnacle of the Pistols for me, actually. The early gigs we did with Sid, we looked great, we sounded great… To begin with, Sid really wanted to make it work.

How aware were you of his involvement with heroin?

To tell the truth, I was oblivious to how bad that New York scene was. We were only close for a couple of years but Sid was an intelligent guy. People think he was a dumb-arse punk, but he just played on that. It was his act. He was right on the button, he knew what was going on. [His death] was shocking more than anything.

And out of all this chaos came *Never Mind The Bollocks… Here's The Sex Pistols*. How did that happen?

Natural energy? I dunno. Steve and Glen were good songwriters, John wrote great lyrics. We were running on a natural high.

Your drumming on that record is widely admired. [Veteran *Bollocks* engineer/producer] Bill Price said it was one of the best rhythm sections he'd ever recorded. Were you aware of your talent?

No (*laughs*). I'd be the first to say I'm not technically a good drummer. But what I do, I do well. What I did fitted in with what we did. I locked in with Steve, that driving energy, there weren't too many frills. We didn't have time to learn any. No sooner had we learned to play, we were off.

You've said you really liked Lydon's post-Pistols work, PiL's *Metal Box* particularly. Did you think the Pistols could have developed musically?

Yes, without a doubt. One of my greatest regrets is we didn't make a second album. I think it would have gone in a darker direction, maybe where John was heading. People were saying, "Glen's gone, you've lost your songwriter," but Steve was developing as a songwriter. I liked the direction we were going with Holidays In The Sun, Bodies and so on.

The split must have been confusing. To simply fizzle out after the US tour in 1978…

(*Deep sigh*) I was glad. We'd all had enough by then. The pressure was incredible. Touring with ex-Vietnam bodyguards, the cops checking on us everywhere, Sid nearly dying from an overdose… it was horrible, actually. I can't even remember what happened afterwards.

You and Steve flew to Rio and recorded with the train robber, Ronnie Biggs…

I remember thinking at the time, "We all ➢

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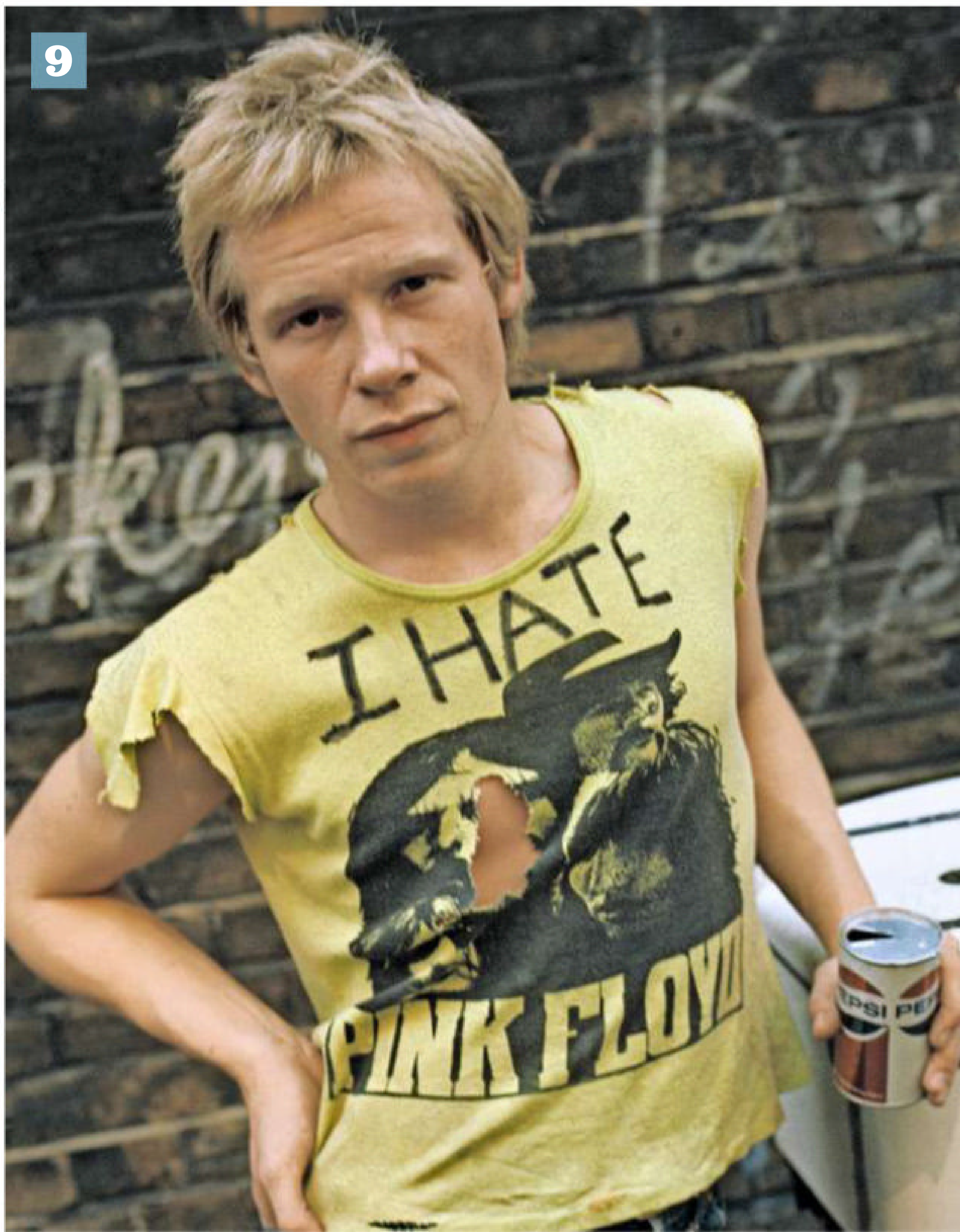

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need a break, then we can reconvene down the pub and sort it out." But it didn't happen like that. I know John thinks we left him on his own [in America] but we just needed to get out of there. So we went to Rio – another one of Malcolm's mad ideas for the film [The Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle]. John felt bitter… but there's never a good way to end shit like that.

Did you enjoy Biggs's company?

He was all right, a bit like us. Well, he wasn't, he was a south London petty criminal who by chance ended up being part of the Great Train Robbery. Doing that stuff with Ronnie Biggs wasn't one of the more tasteful things we did. I don't look back on The Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle and think, "What a great artistic work!" I know John hates it. Some people like it. I suppose it was funny – up to a point.

Was there a plan after the Pistols ended? The Professionals were up and running fairly quickly.

To be honest, we were lost, we didn't know what the fuck to do. We ended up getting involved in this Hollywood film, Ladies And Gentlemen, The Fabulous Stains. We went to Canada [in March 1980] to film it with Paul Simonon and Ray Winstone [as on-screen bandmates in 'The Looters']. We wrote the song Join The Professionals, which gave us a name for a new band. Steve didn't want to sing – I mean, how could you top Johnny Rotten as a singer? – but he ended up doing it anyway. We got an album together [November 1981's *I Didn't See It Coming*], but Steve was getting pretty fucked up by then. I thought, "Oh god, here we go again…" The production was crap, but they were good songs.

The Professionals were involved in a bad car crash in Minneapolis the week *I Didn't See It Coming* was released. Did you feel your life as a musician was doomed to bad luck?

Well, if [Steve's] drug thing wasn't bad enough… (*Pause*) I remember waking up in the hospital screaming my head off. I've seen pictures of the crash, it's horrific – how we walked out of that alive, I don't know. The other driver, who was drunk, was killed. I was in the front, without a seatbelt on. I was lucky – Paul [Myers, bass] and Ray [McVeigh, guitar] shouted out from the back seat and I turned round, so the back of my head, not the front, hit the dashboard. I was pretty mangled up for six months. We managed to get back to the States to finish the tour and – surprise, surprise – that fucked up. We were at the airport waiting to go home and Steve didn't turn up. He's still there now (*laughs*).

After the Pistols, did you have enough money not to work?

(*Laughs*) No, not at all! We had nothing. Luckily we had an album that was iconic and still selling. So we had an asset, and, dare I say it, a brand as well.

Did you realise instantly how momentous *Bollocks* was?

No, not until 10 or 15 years afterwards. People forget that [the industry] was keen to sweep away punk, as there were all these lovely new wave and New Romantic bands coming along, who didn't cause no trouble. All your Spandaus and Duran Durans. No one talked about *Never Mind The Bollocks…* much. It was only on its tenth or 15th anniversary people started saying, "Looking back, it was quite important, culturally and artistically, all this punk stuff."

The Pistols' finances were finally sorted out in 1986, when McLaren lost an action brought by Lydon in the High Court. Did that change your fortunes?

John managed to get the money going back to the band, but most of it had been eaten up by lawyers' costs. There was a bit left. But thank you, John, for doing that. He was the most sensible one at that time, while me and Steve were hiding our heads in the sand.

Your next group was Chiefs Of Relief, fronted by ex-Bow Wow Wow guitarist Matthew Ashman. Why team up with them?

I was lost again, and at a loose end. I was friends with Matthew Ashman, through the Malcolm connection, and I quite liked what they were doing, that rock-rap crossover. Their drummer Dave Barbe [aka David Barbarossa] had left, so Matthew asked me to join them. Matthew could write good songs but he was another fuck-up – I just attract them. A drugs thing? Yes, he was OK at first but it got worse as we went along. We made a good album, did a great tour with Big Audio Dynamite, but no one really wanted to know. They were more interested in Half Man Half Biscuit (*laughs*).

COOKIE CUTS

Three volleys from a Pistol's *batterie*, saluted by **Pat Gilbert**.

THE PUNK PINNACLE

Sex Pistols

★★★★★

Never Mind The Bollocks… Here's The Sex Pistols

(VIRGIN, 1977)

Bollocks' high-gloss sheen and aural clarity – courtesy of Wessex Studios producers Chris Thomas and Bill Price – accentuated everything that had made the Pistols so inspirational in the first place, including Cook's drums, both juicily thuggish and intuitively sensitive to each track's mood and gear-changes. Marvel at the bounce in Pretty Vacant's tribal intro beat, Bodies' metronomic pummelling, New York's crash-y, syncopated fills. The boy's a natural.

THE INDIE TRIUMPH

Edwyn Collins

★★★★

Gorgeous George

(SETANTA, 1994)

OK, *Gorgeous George*'s breakthrough smash A Girl Like You saw Cook playing along to a sample of Len Barry's swinging Northern Soul staple 1-2-3, but elsewhere the ex-Pistol showcased hitherto untested techniques – spatial Floyd-esque beats on The Campaign For Real Rock, jazzy rim-shots on the title track, a brisk country metre on Make Me Feel Again. Collins could boast a real-life Pistol in his holster and Cook a long-overdue shot at reinvention.

THE BALLSY BOUNCE-BACK

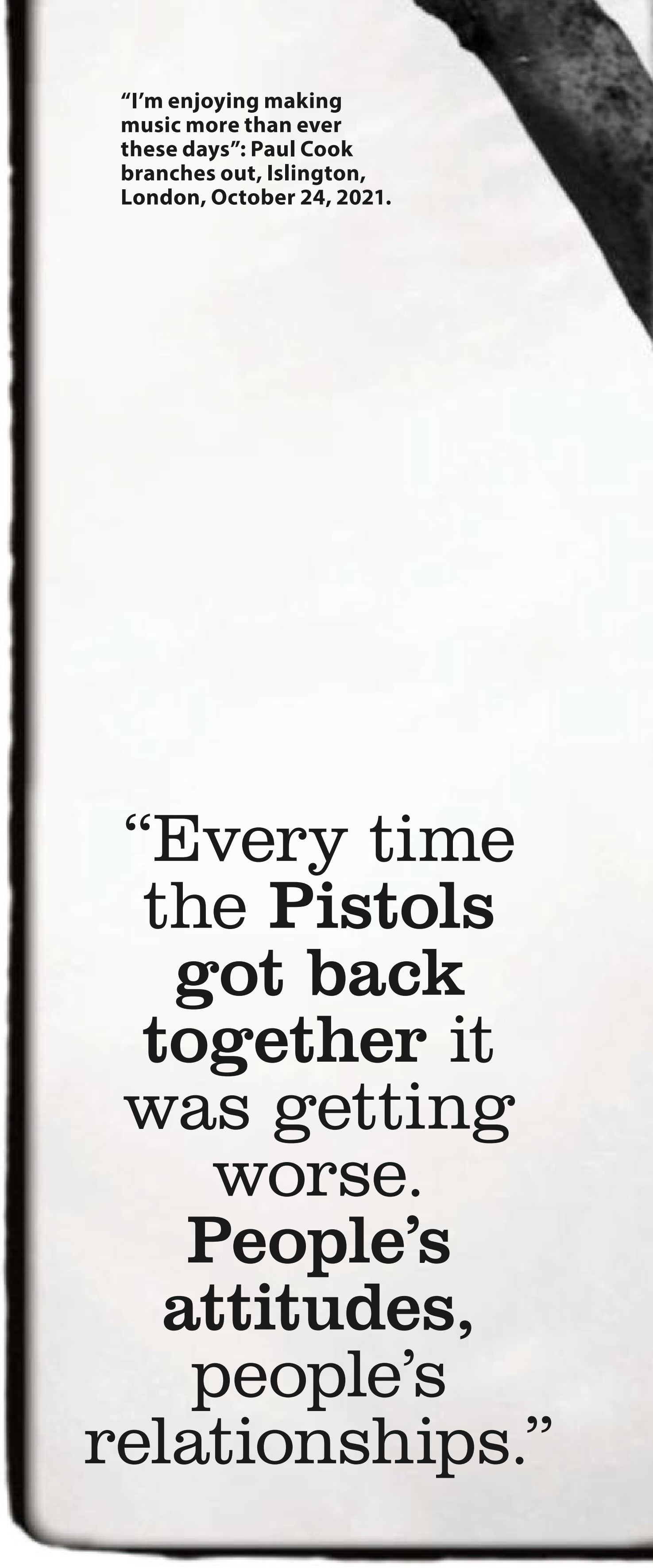
The Professionals

★★★

What In The World

(AUTOMATON, 2017)

Who knew Cookie could write a stirring chord-change or 10? This debut from the millennial resuscitation of the drummer's post-Pistols unit featured Paul and new singer-guitarist Tom Spencer setting off an album's worth of rock fireworks, with guests Steve Jones, Billy Duffy, Duff McKagan, Mick Jones *et al* dialling their amps to 11. No Pistols fan would feel short-changed by Good Man Down, Going Going Gone or Take Me Down.



"I'm enjoying making music more than ever these days": Paul Cook branches out, Islington, London, October 24, 2021.

"Every time the **Pistols got back together** it was getting worse. **People's attitudes,** people's relationships."

You worked steadily in the early and mid-'90s with Vic Godard and Edwyn Collins. What was the attraction?

Vic is a great songwriter and I knew him from way back. Edwyn was producing Vic's *End Of The Surrey People* album. I knew Orange Juice were pretty popular but I wasn't really familiar with their music. But it was obvious to me Edwyn was a real talent. It was a great learning curve for me, actually, playing along to his mad songs and key changes. Edwyn was at a low ebb at that time – but then he wrote A Girl Like You and had enormous success with *Gorgeous George*.

Did you enjoy being back on the road?

Yeah, we toured the world. Edwyn was massive in places like Germany. I'm still close to him now. Of course, he had that terrible stroke [in 2005], which shows what a fighter he is. Everyone thought he was this effeminate indie type but he's a tough cookie, very strong-minded. I'm in awe of his recovery.

Your daughter Hollie was growing up through this time…

Yes, I was dealing with all that. I was getting a little bit fucked-up – drugs – it's not very well documented. But I was keeping myself to myself, but doing the family thing as well. Trying to keep things under control. But it never got too bad.

What kind of drugs?

Never you mind! (*Laughs*) Let's just say a bit of everything. I realised I needed to rein it in a bit,

Andrew Cotterill

but I had my family around to help me hold it all together.

Against all expectations, the Sex Pistols reunited in 1996. As "the peacemaker", did you help bring it all together?

I dunno how it came about. There were always rumblings. Steve and I have a great manager in LA, Anita Camarata, who had connections to John. I never, ever thought that John would be interested in a reunion but suddenly we heard he fancied doing it. "Really?! You sure?!" And I'm glad we did, it was a great tour.

Were you anxious about getting involved?

Oh totally! I thought, "We're playing massive places here." First time round we played small venues, we'd never played to more than a few thousand at the most. Now we were going to play to 30,000 people at Finsbury Park for the big comeback gig. But there were enough egos on that stage to fill Wembley Stadium 10 times over. Finsbury Park was one of my favourite-ever Pistols gigs. It was brilliant.

Do you think you could have made a new album and continued full-time?

Everyone was getting on OK when we started, but as it went along it soon all fell apart personality-wise. A lot of the old resentments came up. Steve was very uptight about his relationship with John. I turned up having been on tour with Edwyn, and having had such a laugh, and then here's the Pistols with this sense-of-humour bypass. We saw that out for a year but we couldn't wait for it to end.

There were subsequent get-togethers, including the Pistols At The Palace in 2002, the 2008 tour…

I noticed every time we got back together it was getting worse. People's attitudes, people's relationships. What's the point if you aren't going to have a bit of fun? It was a poisonous atmosphere. It's never going to happen again.

So no amount of money would bring you all back together?

(*Comedic squint*) Why, are you making us an offer? No, it won't happen. Seventy-year-old Sex Pistols singing about anarchy? Not a pretty sight.

Your daughter Hollie's career took off in 2014. What advice did you give her about going into the business?

Well… I didn't push her into it at all. She went to a music/arts school and has always been a good singer. Her mum [Cook's wife Jeni] used to sing backing vocals with Culture Club. She grew up with [Boy] George. Hollie was quite a shy little girl, then she bailed out of music school and toured with The Slits. Ari [Up] was great with her, she really brought her out of herself. She's just finished her fourth album – I'm very proud of her.

Since 2016, The Professionals have been back together full-time, though you're now the only original member. Why revive them?

Ray and Paul were always around. Ray was always the instigator when it came to doing anything. Steve was never going to get involved, he wouldn't ever leave LA. We were in the studio one day and [present singer/guitarist] Tom Spencer was there with The Men They Couldn't Hang. He joined in and it sounded good. We did a gig at the 100 Club and it went from there.

2017's *What In The World* and the new album, *SNAFU*, have been well-received. Who are the principal songwriters?

Me and Tom. I play guitar well enough to write songs. People don't realise I co-wrote the majority of *I Didn't See It Coming*, as Steve was totally out to lunch at the time and I had to take control of it. We fell out with Ray so I asked favours from other guitarists all over the place – Jonesy, Mick Jones, Billy Duffy, Phil Collen. Tom's a force of nature with a fertile mind when it comes to lyrics. He's got too much going on, I have to rein him in sometimes.

***SNAFU* – that could be the title of any number of records or projects you've been involved in…**

Yes, that could be the title of my life story – Situation Normal: All Fucked Up (*laughs*). But I've had a great time making music and, to be honest, I'm enjoying it more than ever these days. It's a good place to be in.

The Professionals' SNAFU is out now on the JTP label/ theprofessionalsband.com

"We put ourselves through angst": the classic Deep Purple line-up (from left), Ian Paice, Jon Lord, Ritchie Blackmore, Ian Gillan, Roger Glover, with composer Malcolm Arnold (centre), 1969.

© Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS/Corbis via Getty Images

“Meet Our New Guitarist!”

Fifty years since their revered Mark II line-up cut *Machine Head,* the baroque rock monolith that remains **Deep Purple** relive their greatest hits, mishaps and a well-aimed plate of spaghetti. But can they reach the end of this feature without one of them getting sacked? “We’ve always liked surprises,” they assure **Mark Blake**.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ZDENEK SPICKA? DEEP Purple don’t know, even though he helped inspire their greatest hit. On December 4, 1971, Spicka, a 21-year-old Czech living in Switzerland, attended a Frank Zappa And The Mothers Of Invention show at the Montreux Casino. Spicka was carrying a flare gun of the kind used to signal distress at sea. During Zappa’s song King Kong, Spicka fired the weapon in the air. Its flare ignited the ceiling tiles, setting the whole wooden building ablaze.

“It was a raging inferno,” remembers eyewitness and Deep Purple vocalist Ian Gillan. Luckily, Zappa, his Mothers and the audience escaped death or serious injury. A warrant was issued for Spicka’s arrest, but he fled Switzerland and was never found.

“A musician’s life is full of misadventures,” says Gillan today. That night, a despondent Deep Purple watched the venue go up in smoke. Zappa’s gig was the last of the season, and Purple had planned to make their next album, *Machine Head*, in the disused casino. ➢

Purple patches: (clockwise from left) Purple Mk I (back row) Rod Evans, Nick Simper, Paice, (front) Blackmore with fiancée Babs Hardie, Lord with fiancée Judy Fielding, January 9, 1969; "The loudest band in the world" in 1972; composer Malcolm Arnold conducts the rehearsal for *Concerto For Group And Orchestra* at London's Royal Albert Hall, September 23, 1969; performing Fireball on Top Of The Pops, December 16, 1971; (right and below) Deep Purple LPs; a flare gun inspired Smoke On The Water.

Deep Purple
The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Conducted by Malcolm Arnold
DEEP PURPLE
MACHINE HEAD
DEEP PURPLE
MADE IN JAPAN

Instead, they commandeered Montreux's empty Grand Hotel and transformed a corridor into an ad hoc recording studio. In the meantime, Purple's bass guitarist, Roger Glover, woke from a dream with a potential song title whizzing around his temporal lobe. Smoke On The Water told the tale of the casino fire and would become Deep Purple's defining anthem.

Almost 50 years after *Machine Head*, Purple have released *Turning To Crime*, a covers album of songs by Dylan, Cream, Little Feat, Fleetwood Mac and more. Until now, Purple have always made music together in the same room. Their latest was recorded under pandemic restrictions with the five current band members in different parts of the world.

"I said to the others, 'If we can pull an album together in two weeks in a hotel corridor after a fire, we can do this,'" says Roger Glover.

"Like *Machine Head*, we put ourselves through angst," adds drummer Ian Paice, "but we proved it can be done."

DEEP PURPLE'S STORY ENCOMPASSES ANGST AND adversity, highs and lows, and, in recent times, a dogged refusal to go gentle into that good night. *Turning To Crime* is their 22nd studio album.

Gillan, Glover and Paice are all that remains of what aficionados call the 'Classic Mark II' line-up (once completed by guitarist Ritchie Blackmore and keyboard player Jon Lord). Mark II's first reign lasted only four years, but blueprinted their virtuoso hard rock with the hits Black Night, Strange Kind Of Woman and Smoke On The Water, and 1972's benchmark *Machine Head*.

Mark II Purple imploded in summer 1973, but reunited nine years later. Gillan, Glover and Paice have weathered storms since, including the departures of Blackmore and Lord. "But even if Ritchie was still in the band people would still be talking about the classic era," says a knowing Glover.

Ritchie Blackmore, an ex-Joe Meek session hand and one of Screaming Lord Sutch's Savages, formed Deep Purple with Lord, Paice, original vocalist Rod Evans and bassist Nick Simper in 1968. Their debut single, Hush, was a US hit, but its psychedelic go-go dancing pop was misleading. Really, Lord wanted to compose classical rock concertos and Blackmore was soon besotted with *Led Zeppelin I*. Purple needed new blood to find their true identity.

This morning, Ian Gillan calls MOJO from his house in the Portuguese Algarve. You can almost see the Atlantic sun glinting off the terracotta and whitewashed walls. Life wasn't always so good. Before Deep Purple, Gillan and Glover scraped by in west London vocal harmony group Episode Six. "I learned a lot, but we had no money to eat," Gillan recalls. "I supplemented my diet with dog biscuits from the local pet shop."

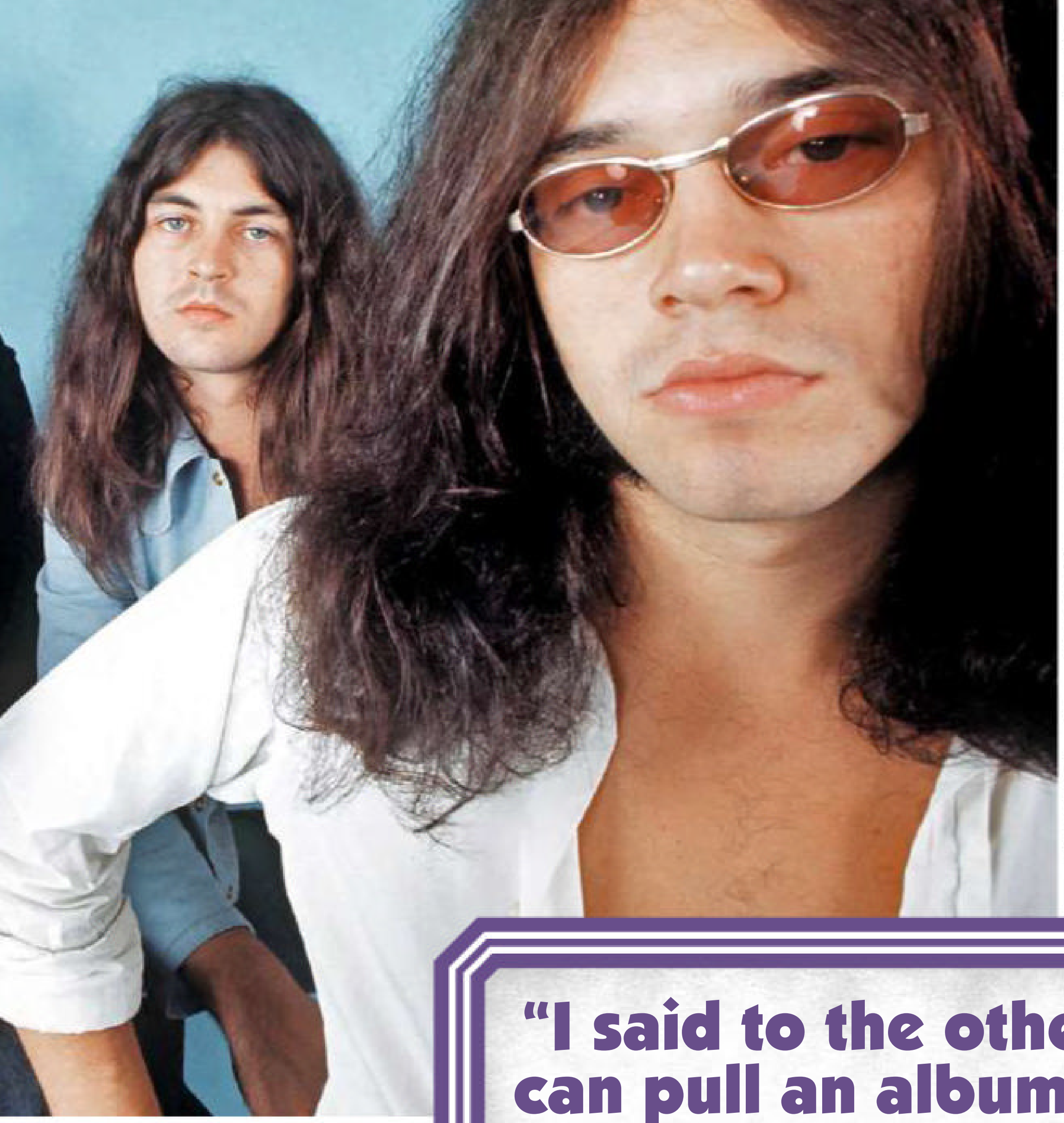
Gillan's voice was too big for Episode Six's flyweight pop, but it suited Blackmore's vision of a tougher-sounding Purple. Blackmore wanted a 'Robert Plant' and Gillan fitted the bill. "Ian had a swagger about him," says Glover. "If we went into a pub he'd go in with his hands down as if he had side guns and was looking for trouble."

...."As soon as Gillan started singing, it all made sense," confirms Ian Paice. "But I'm afraid I wasn't a very forgiving musician. I told Roger, 'I lead, you follow…' And, to be fair, he did."

"Paice gave the others the nod and told them I was OK," recalls Glover.

Evans and Simper were dismissed, setting the tone for a coldly pragmatic approach to man-management. The new line-up made its debut at London's Speakeasy on July 10,

Alamy (2), Camera Press/Heilemann, Barry Plummer



> **"I said to the others, 'If we can pull an album together in two weeks in a hotel corridor after a fire, we can do this.'" Roger Glover**

1969. "I was thrilled, scared, but I thought, 'This is what it's all been leading up to,'" says Gillan.

Mark II Purple's first album was Jon Lord's pet project, *Concerto For Group And Orchestra*, recorded live with The Royal Philharmonic. It was a Top 30 hit but eclipsed by the next one, *Deep Purple In Rock*. This was Blackmore's baby, wedding his Hendrix-plays-Beethoven guitar solos to Lord's overdriven Hammond B-3 (nicknamed the "rhythm organ" by his bandmates) and Gillan's Tarzan cry. It demonstrated Purple's love of volume and speed, but Gillan won't let them be pigeonholed. To wit: *Turning To Crime* contains an off-piste cover of skiffler Lonnie Donegan's 1959 hit, The Battle Of New Orleans. Gillan likens it to Anyone's Daughter, a country hoedown on Mark II's 1971 album, *Fireball*. "We've always liked surprises," he insists. "Anyone's Daughter was the beginning of that." But perhaps the others like surprises a little less: Gillan's proposed cover of Dean Martin's Little Ole Wine Drinker Me was vetoed.

Still, there's a contrariness to Deep Purple, some of which originates with their vocalist. In the past Gillan has described himself as "unyielding, arrogant and pig-headed". Today he settles for "tenacious". While some criticised *Fireball* for being a rushed sequel to *Deep Purple In Rock*, Gillan claims it's Purple's best. "But ask me again tomorrow and I might have changed my mind," he adds, mischievously.

ROGER GLOVER JOINS THE CONVERSATION VIA Zoom from his gold disc-lined home studio. He peers down his spectacles into the camera before removing a bass draped round his neck. Glover lives in Switzerland; not "on the Lake Geneva shoreline" of Smoke On The Water fame, but near Zurich.

"When I met Roger in 1965 he was a serious dude, an art student," recalls Gillan. "I'd never known anyone like him before." The pair started writing songs together in Episode Six, and have been doing so, off and on, ever since.

Deep Purple Mark II's third studio album, *Machine Head*, is widely regarded as the jewel in their crown. EMI had given the band two to three weeks in which to deliver the LP. They recorded in Montreux, partly to take advantage of a tax loophole.

Glover is currently working on his memoir and making sense of the past. "The thing about being in a band is it's you against the world," he says. "So the search for somewhere to record *Machine Head* drew us all together. When you've got to discipline yourself, the brain works harder."

After the casino fire, Montreux promoter Claude Nobs booked them into the Pavilion Theatre. But they ignored a 10pm curfew and nearby residents called the police. Roadies locked the theatre doors to keep the *gendarmerie* outside until Purple finished recording Smoke On The Water. Nobs sweet-talked the police, and Purple moved into a more remote venue, The Grand Hotel.

There was something of The Shining's eerie Overlook Hotel to The Grand's deserted suites and hallways. Purple banished the wintry cold with an industrial fan heater; roadies lined an upstairs corridor with mattresses to dampen the echo; Blackmore's amp was set up at one end; Lord's keyboards at the other; Paice's drums in an alcove, and Glover in an adjacent room. Engineer Martin Birch parked the Rolling Stones mobile recording truck outside, and installed closed-circuit TV so he could communicate with the band from the desk. A red 'recording' light was wired up in the passageway to replicate the feel of a real studio.

Sixteen days later, Deep Purple had a new LP in the can. "The adversity is part of the fun," offers Gillan. "You don't think it is at the time, but it is." ➢

Deep Purple
BURN

Machine Head was released in March 1972. It zigzagged between gonzo rock, blues and jazz with classical flourishes and big-band swing. Like *Turning To Crime*'s diverse selections, *Machine Head* illustrated Purple's myriad influences: John Mayall and singing jazz poet Oscar Brown Jnr (on Lazy); Led Zeppelin and Johann Sebastian Bach (Highway Star), and even the theme from kitsch TV show Batman on Space Truckin'.

The album reached Number 1 in the UK, with Smoke On The Water a hit the following summer. "Nobody expected that," says Glover, partly because it was only included after EMI complained the LP was too short.

On-stage, Purple explored these songs further. The subsequent double-live *Made In Japan*, with its elongated versions of *Machine Head*'s core songs, showed off Purple's experimental dynamism. "Deep Purple has always been an instrumental and performing group," suggests Gillan. "I just ride the pony."

> **"Ritchie Blackmore is an articulate, lyrical guitar player. But a very complex, quirky guy."** Ian Gillan

FROM THE OUTSIDE, THEN, THEY seemed invincible. In 1972, The Guinness Book Of Records anointed Purple 'The Loudest Band In The World' following a 117dB show at London's Rainbow Theatre where, apparently, "three audience members fell unconscious." In reality, the band weren't faring much better. Purple had postponed several dates after Gillan and Blackmore contracted hepatitis within months of each other. But an inflamed liver was all they now had in common.

Blackmore, with his pilgrim hat and trademark black garb, had always cultivated a mysterious public image. But rock-star Ritchie and real Ritchie had merged into one. He'd withdrawn from the others and become hyper-critical of Gillan's voice. When Purple recorded their next album, *Who Do We Think We Are*, in Rome, the pair couldn't be in the same room together. "Ritchie is an articulate, lyrical guitar player," says Gillan. "But a very complex, quirky guy."

"I do admire Ritchie for being so single-minded," adds Glover. "He doesn't give a shit about anyone or anything but his own path. He's a genius, but like a lot of geniuses something else is missing."

Who Do We Think We Are was rush-released in January 1973. It delivered a hit single, Woman From Tokyo, but nobody seems terribly fond of it. "I have good memories of those '70s albums, but not that one," says Glover. "This is me analysing it years later, but we really should have taken a break."

"The music had become predictable," confirms Gillan. "We were repeating ourselves."

The singer composed his resignation letter in a hotel room in Dayton, Ohio. "I think Deep Purple has become a stagnant, boring machine," he wrote. In 1970, Gillan had sung on the soundtrack to Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd-Webber's West End hit Jesus Christ Superstar. Two years later, he turned down the lead role in director Norman Jewison's film version as it conflicted with Purple's touring commitments. The singer says he's been offered five different film roles over the years, including a "Mad Max-style action thing". Gillan never wanted to be an actor, but in 1973 he craved a life and career outside of Deep Purple.

DEEP PURPLE
Come taste the band
Gillan
MR UNIVERSE
RAINBOW
DOWN TO EARTH
Whitesnake
LIVE... IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

With Gillan gone, Blackmore decided to shake up the group still further, and fired Roger Glover. "Ritchie said it was business, nothing personal. But it was a horrible, depressing moment," Glover winces. "I was being asked to leave the biggest band in the world."

IAN PAICE'S KITCHEN CLOCK has stopped, so he joins our Zoom meeting a few minutes late. Paice apologises and explains that he'll be eating lunch during the interview: "So excuse me as I munch between questions." The drummer lives in a large house near Henley-On-Thames. MOJO is treated to a worm's-eye view of a curtain pelmet and its owner's silvery ponytail and freshly-made sandwich.

Paice started his musical career as a teenager, playing drums in his father's big band. "He was this insane little animal who swung like crazy," recalls Gillan. In summer 1973, though, Paice acclimatised himself to Deep Purple's new recruits: unknown vocalist David Coverdale, and ex-Trapeze bassist/vocalist Glenn Hughes.

Roger Glover remembers visiting Purple's management office around this time and seeing a copy of the trade mag Billboard. "And there was a big headline, 'Deep Purple Album Artist Of The Year! Number One Everywhere!' and there was a photo of them with Coverdale and Hughes. That *really* stuck the knife in. They weren't even in the band when we achieved all that."

The new Deep Purple managed three more studio albums. Gillan hasn't listened to them, but Glover has: "The first one, *Burn*, had two good songs. The next two [*Stormbringer* and *Come Taste The Band*] I thought, 'OK, I know where this is coming from…'"

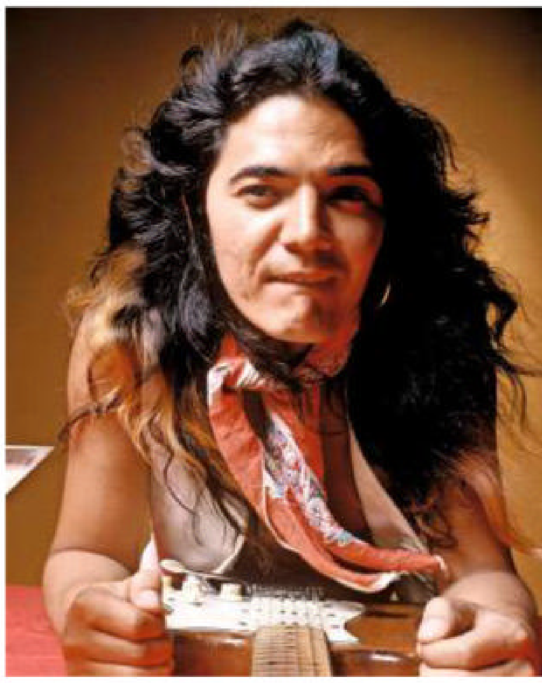
The end was nigh when Blackmore himself quit after 1974's *Stormbringer*, to be replaced by Iowa-born guitarist Tommy Bolin. He and Hughes brought a limber, funkier element and Class A drugs into Purple. "We didn't realise," shrugs Paice, "because the three of us just liked a drink. So it became a split camp, with Glenn getting into trouble and Tommy in huge trouble."

In December 1975, Purple performed in Jakarta. "But Tommy shot up some bad smack and had a dead arm. So all he could do was play barre chords with one finger. Lovely guy in the studio, but a mess on-stage."

It was an inauspicious end. Deep Purple split in July 1976, and Bolin overdosed and died five months later. Its surviving members emerged, disorientated, into an unfamiliar new world. Gillan had already lost a small fortune on a hotel in Oxford and a failing motorcycle business. He scored hits with his own band, Gillan, in the early '80s. "But I didn't enjoy being the leader. I'm no good at filling out forms."

One day in 1983, Gillan woke up after a night's drinking to discover he'd joined Black Sabbath. He survived one album and tour, performing in front of a Stonehenge stage set (the 'rockumentary' This Is Spinal Tap was still in production) and singing Smoke On The Water as an encore. "It was an interesting detour," he says now.

Glover, meanwhile, produced albums for Nazareth, Rory



DEEP PURPLE

Machine heads: (clockwise from top left) Jon Lord, smoke on the piano; Blackmore smashes it up in the US, 1974; Tommy Bolin plays it differently, 1975; Mk IV pool boys, with Glenn Hughes (second left) and David Coverdale (centre), June 1975; flying high in the US, 1974; Blackmore enjoying the Mk II reunion; Ian Paice flashes the cash, 1974.

Getty (5), Camera Press/Heilemann, Andy Phillips

Gallagher and Judas Priest, before joining Blackmore in his pop-metal group Rainbow: "It was different, because it was Ritchie's band and I knew my position."

PAICE AND JON LORD'S SITUATION PRÉCISED THE issue they all faced. "Anything we did in a similar style to Purple could never be as good as Purple," says Paice. He and Lord frittered away half-a-million each launching a jazz-rock power trio, Paice Ashton Lord, at the height of new wave. Both then joined David Coverdale's roistering blues-rockers Whitesnake as salaried musicians. On-stage with noisy guitar hero Gary Moore in 1983, Paice realised he was having to play too loud and his timing was off. Today, he rolls up his sleeves to show MOJO his forearms: "I am not a big guy like John Bonham. One of John's arms was like two of mine. Playing like that was a physical impossibility for me."

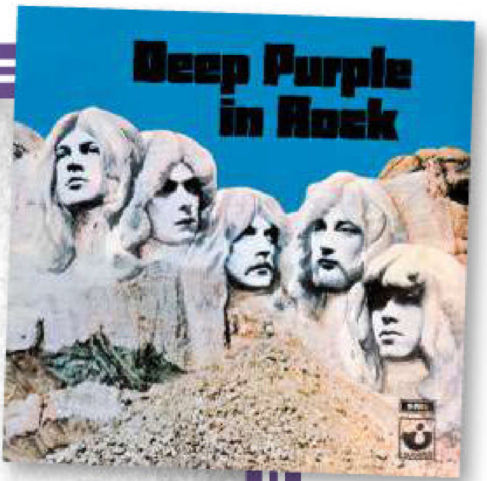
It was time for the inevitable. By 1984, all parties' respective managers were steering them towards a Mark II reunion. Only Roger Glover hesitated. "I worried people wouldn't be interested," he says. "When you're in a band you don't know what it is people like about you. Listening to *Made In Japan* it suddenly came to me. There was a lot of wildness in Deep Purple. You never knew what to expect."

The comeback album, 1984's *Perfect Strangers*, suggested a vintage Rolls-Royce given a fresh lick of paint. It outsold the rest of the Mark II catalogue and went platinum in the US. "Going back to the band was like putting on a lovely old pair of wellies," grins Glover. "But after *Perfect Strangers* it went down the tubes for about 10 years."

Blackmore and Gillan were soon at loggerheads, as the guitarist struggled to relinquish the power he'd had in Rainbow. "My dad always told me if you step out front to be a bandleader you can't go back," says Paice. ➢

Deep Cuts

A 10-track mixtape of Deeper Purple, compiled by Mark Blake.



SHADES OF DEEP PURPLE

Mandrake Root

(from Shades Of Deep Purple, Parlophone, 1968)

This freewheeling prog-rocker is the anti-Hush, and suggests Deep Purple Mark I have ingested the song's titular hallucinogenic. Singer Rod Evans quits early, letting Jon Lord's Hammond steer the others into trippy psychedelic waters. Cued up The Prisoners and The Charlatans years later.

Flight Of The Rat

(from Deep Purple In Rock, EMI Harvest, 1970)

Peak Mark II Purple, fit to burst with jousting guitar and keys and even a drum solo. "Spread the word around, the rat is leaving town," implores Ian Gillan, as his bandmates charge like a four-headed Grand National winner down the final furlong.

Demon's Eye

(from Fireball, EMI Harvest, 1971)

Demon's Eye became the B-side of Purple's Fireball 45 and an A-side in Mexico. "Purple only ever had hits by accident," insists Gillan. This swampy groove-driven thing is the one that got away. Growling organ lays the bedrock for a wonderfully languid Blackmore guitar solo as Gillan tries, vainly, to give his latest witchy lover the heave-ho.

Pictures Of Home

(from Machine Head, Purple Records, 1972)

Recorded in a Montreux hotel corridor as Gillan shook off a bout of hepatitis. Roger Glover's bleak lyric about a "prison of my own making" captures Purple's dislocation, while the music flies over the landscape like the song's "black-footed crow".

When A Blind Man Cries

(B-side, Never Before, Purple Records, 1972)

Bafflingly, Ritchie Blackmore vetoed this graceful hymn's inclusion on *Machine Head*. Had it made the cut it would have challenged… *In Rock's* Child In Time as Mark II's finest power ballad.

Rat Bat Blue

(from Who Do We Think We Are, Purple Records, 1973)

Supposedly Roger Glover's favourite track on his least favourite Mark II album. Purple were falling apart when they made this. Still, it contains Blackmore's greatest unheralded riff; an Olympic Gold-standard scream and one hilarious quasi-classical harpsichord/synth solo.

You Fool No One

(from Burn, Purple Records, 1974)

With Gillan and Glover gone, Purple Mark IV headed down the blues/jazz/heavy metal rabbit hole. They added psychedelic soul to the mix here, while the 16:44 live reading on '75's *Made In Europe* has a snatch of Hebrew folk song Hava Nagila.

Gettin' Tighter

(from Come Taste The Band, Purple Records, 1975)

Blackmore's replacement, guitarist Tommy Bolin, found a kindred musical and narcotic spirit in bass player Glenn Hughes. Purple's last studio LP of the '70s distils their mutual love of funk, with Hughes singing lead here. A slinky, joyful affair, but Purple fans didn't want their heroes sounding like Stevie Wonder. The jig, and gig, was up.

Perfect Strangers

(from Perfect Strangers, Polydor, 1984)

The title track from Mark II's platinum-selling comeback defied the '80s trend for hard rock legends going soft. This is DP's Kashmir, with Lord and Blackmore conjuring the sound of tanks rumbling while Gillan sings, "A thousand warriors I have known" like some ancient soothsayer.

Sometimes I Feel Like Screaming

(from Purpendicular, RCA, 1996)

There was a palpable sense of relief on the re-formed Deep Purple's first Blackmore-less LP, manifesting itself here in their best work since *Perfect Strangers*. Full of vintage DP pomp and bluster, and why play one note when 10 will do? But every noodling solo and histrionic scream is underpinned by a sterling melody.

◄ Roger Glover experienced an epiphany at George Harrison's house. It was the time of Harrison's all-star group, the Traveling Wilburys. "I said to George, 'How do you do it? How does it work?' He replied, 'We all just sit around and throw in ideas.' I remember thinking, 'Oh god, I want to be in a band like that.'"

It would be some time before his wish was granted. In 1989, Gillan was fired after a row with Blackmore. It had been a long time coming. One night on tour, Blackmore stormed into the dressing room carrying a plate of spaghetti. He accused Gillan of smothering his post-gig pasta with tomato ketchup and smashed the plate into his face, "like a custard pie," the singer recalls.

The two men traded comedy threats in the music press. Blackmore said he'd like to have Gillan "attacked in a blind alley". Gillan claimed, "I'd rather slit my throat than sing with that band again." But Deep Purple and Ian Gillan needed each other. The others persuaded Blackmore to relent and Gillan re-joined for 1993's aptly-titled *The Battle Rages On*….

On tour, though, Blackmore became increasingly isolated from the others. His dressing room door, hung with a sign reading 'The Badger's Lair', was out of bounds to all. Purple's tour manager even devised a system whereby Blackmore and Gillan arrived on-stage via different routes. The tension finally boiled over at Birmingham's NEC Arena in November '93.

The concert was being filmed for a video, but Blackmore didn't appear until halfway through the opening song. He was upset by the film crew's presence and had already thrown water over a cameraman. When he tried to do it again, he accidentally drenched Gillan's wife, Bron, instead. She persuaded her husband not to attack Blackmore and to finish the show instead. Blackmore quit Deep Purple for good at the end of the tour. It was a relief to all.

"I think Ritchie and the rest of the world assumed Purple couldn't exist without him," says Glover. "But we were determined not to let that happen."

DEEP PURPLE RECRUITED STEVE MORSE, GUITAR virtuoso and founder member of muso jazz-rockers Dixie Dregs, in 1994. When a journalist asked how he intended to fill Blackmore's shoes, Morse drolly replied, "As far as I know, Ritchie took them with him when he left." It's been his standard response to the question ever since.

Blackmore made a new musical life for himself away from rock'n'roll. In 1997 he formed the renaissance folk group Blackmore's Night, playing medieval madrigals with lead vocalist and future wife, Candice Night. "When it happened I realised I'd seen it coming for a while," says Glover. "During writing sessions Ritchie would sometimes lapse into a reverie of playing medieval music for two or three hours."

In keeping with Blackmore's retro tastes, he refuses to own a computer or mobile phone. Instead, Blackmore's mother-in-law, Carol Stevens, acts as his business manager and conduit to the 21st century.

"Ritchie and I still swap the odd cordial message," says Gillan. "I think somebody wrote 'I love you' from me in chalk on a rock outside his house. Or maybe we sent it by carrier pigeon?"

Deep Purple re-launched with 1996's *Purpendicular*, and Glover realised he'd become part of his own Traveling Wilburys. "We were standing in a circle in the studio with Steve and I thought, 'This is it!' Everyone was talking, throwing in ideas. I was in the band I always wanted to be in."

By then, several dynasties of hugely successful heavy groups, including Judas Priest, Iron Maiden and Metallica, had used *Machine Head* as an instruction manual. Purple were now sharing festival bills with their disciples, but refused to try and compete.

"I look on heavy metal as the bastard son of Deep Purple," explains Paice. "They took a part of what we did to the next level. I don't have a great love for music that brutal, but God bless 'em, because I know how difficult it is to play."

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In at the Deep end: (clockwise from above) Glover and Lord with George Harrison, Sydney, December 13, 1984; Gillan, Paice and Glover with Metallica's Lars Ulrich, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, 2016; the usual suspects *Turning To Crime*; Ritchie with Candice Night as folk act Blackmore's Night, 1997; Glover, Gillan and Steve Morse on-stage in 2007.

> **"In my teens I could do the pole vault. I can't any more, but I can still try."**
> Ian Gillan

Despite Purple's newfound democracy, not everybody was content. Jon Lord was at least five years older than his bandmates and didn't want to be playing Highway Star every night in his sixties. Lord left Purple in 2002 and went on to record four albums of orchestral music and piano concertos. He died of pancreatic cancer in July 2012.

Purple mourn his passing, but his departure wasn't a surprise. "Jon had been gradually leaving the band for years," says Paice. "He started cutting himself off from us socially on tour. He wouldn't come for a drink after the show, as he wanted to lose weight or go back to his room and write one of his scores. It was very amicable, because Jon had gone above and beyond the call of duty for us."

Lord's replacement was another Purple family member, ex-Rainbow keyboard player, Don Airey. "The chemistry changed, but not by much," says Glover. After the mid-2000s, though, Purple stopped recording new music. "Someone told us albums didn't sell any more and that we should just release singles. But that's not us."

Their fortunes changed with the arrival of Canadian producer Bob Ezrin. Having refereed albums for Lou Reed and Pink Floyd, Ezrin wasn't easily intimidated. Today, all three praise him for bringing Deep Purple back from the brink.

Ezrin's debut, 2013's *Now What?!*, became Purple's first Top 20 hit in over a quarter of a century. *Infinite* (2017) and *Whoosh* (2020) compounded its success and led to this year's Covid-engendered stopgap, *Turning To Crime*. The 'crime' being that Purple broke their golden rule by not recording together in one place.

Ezrin instructed the band members to submit 10 songs each for the album. Votes were cast and the tracks whittled down to a final list. Each member recorded their parts separately. The process gave Gillan the chance to look under the bonnet for the first time. "I finally realised what it is that makes Deep Purple tick," he marvels. "It's almost orchestral how the sounds are partitioned. But it's also jazz, it's rock'n'roll, it's everything…"

GILLAN CLAIMS HE DIDN'T GROW UP PROPERLY UNTIL he was 40 (he's now 76). He's tried to make up for lost time, though. He chopped off his signature mane over two decades ago; has curbed his drinking and now meditates before showtime.

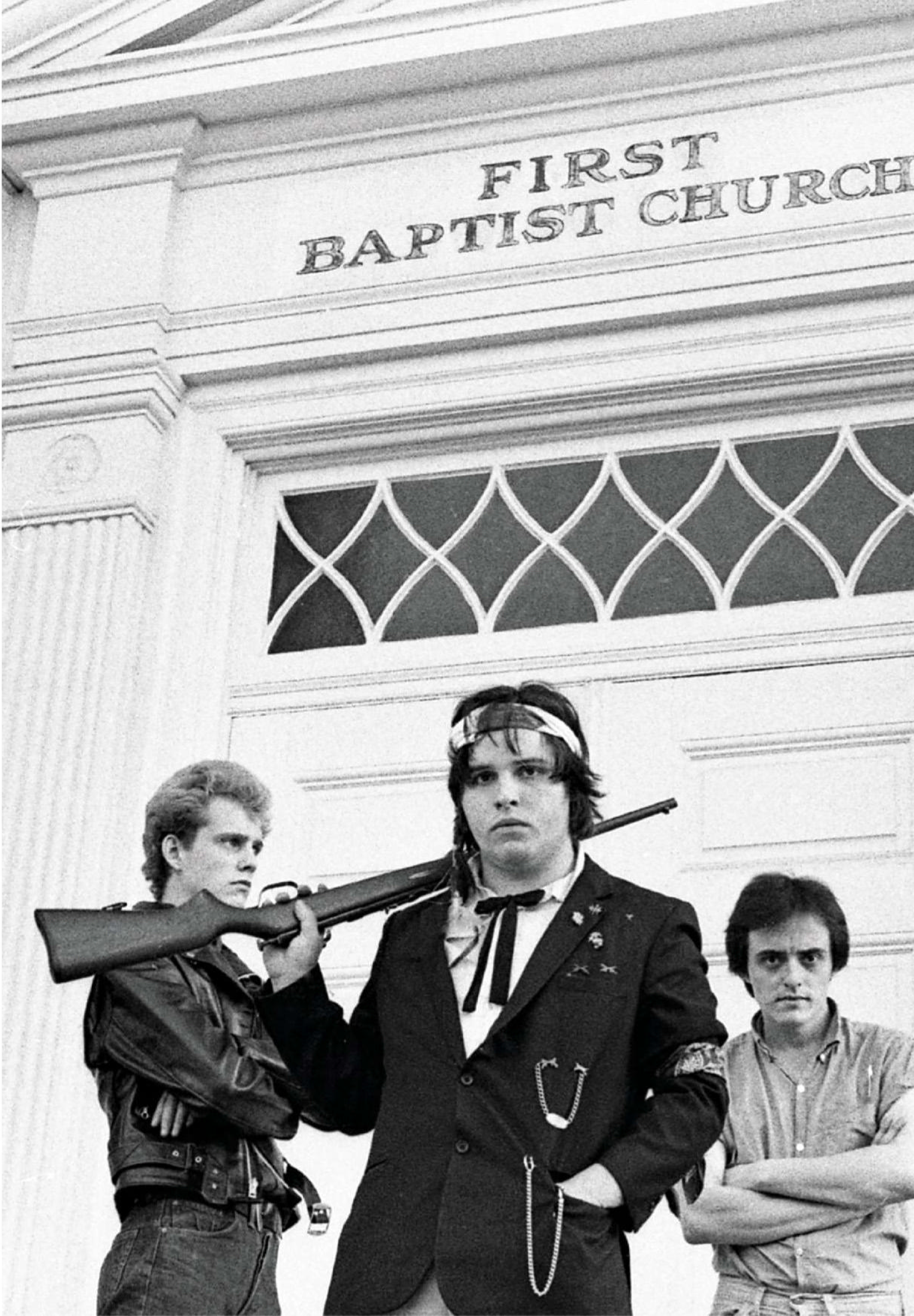
"You've got to bludgeon your way forward in this business," he says. "You can't *not* grow up. If you get locked into having the youthful haircut and the clothes, you lose all credibility. People still ask us, (*puts on an American accent*) 'Hey, man, when you gonna write another Highway Star?' I dunno. In my teens I could do the pole vault. I can't any more, but I can still try."

Deep Purple are a very 21st-century phenomenon: musicians in their sixties and seventies unwilling – or unable – to stop being in a band. "I can't in a million years imagine any of us being close socially if we weren't in Purple," Gillan admits. "The bonding factor is the music and the humour. We're all road hogs. I'm underplaying it, but I absolutely adore it."

In early 2022, arenas will again echo to the sound of rock's most famous riff. "I've never tired of playing Smoke On The Water, no," says Roger Glover, flashing a Zen-like smile. "I long ago stopped worrying about things over which I have no control. Smoke On The Water has a new lease of life every time we play it."

Fifty years on, God bless Zdenek Spicka and his flare gun. Ⓜ

Getty (3), Courtesy Ear Music, Shutterstock


FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH

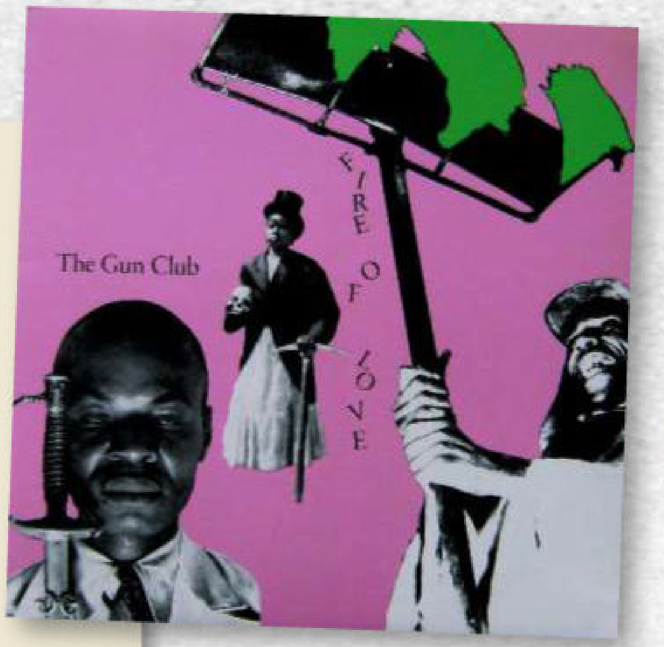
THE GUN CLUB IGNITE THE FIRE OF LOVE

Forty years ago in Los Angeles, punk crashed head-on into American roots and the punk-blues was born. Its frantic midwife was JEFFREY LEE PIERCE, a voodoo-driven, literary-minded musical savant whose group destroyed to create. With memories of heroin, The Cramps and the Blondie fan club, band members and friends recall how the alchemical deal went down. "Whatever his condition was," they say, "Jeff never lost a beat."

Interviews by **ANDREW PERRY** • Portrait by **ED COLVER**

Trigger warning: The Gun Club in 1981 (from left) Ward Dotson, Jeffrey Lee Pierce, Terry Graham, Rob Ritter, outside the First Baptist Church of Hollywood, 6682 Selma Avenue, Los Angeles.

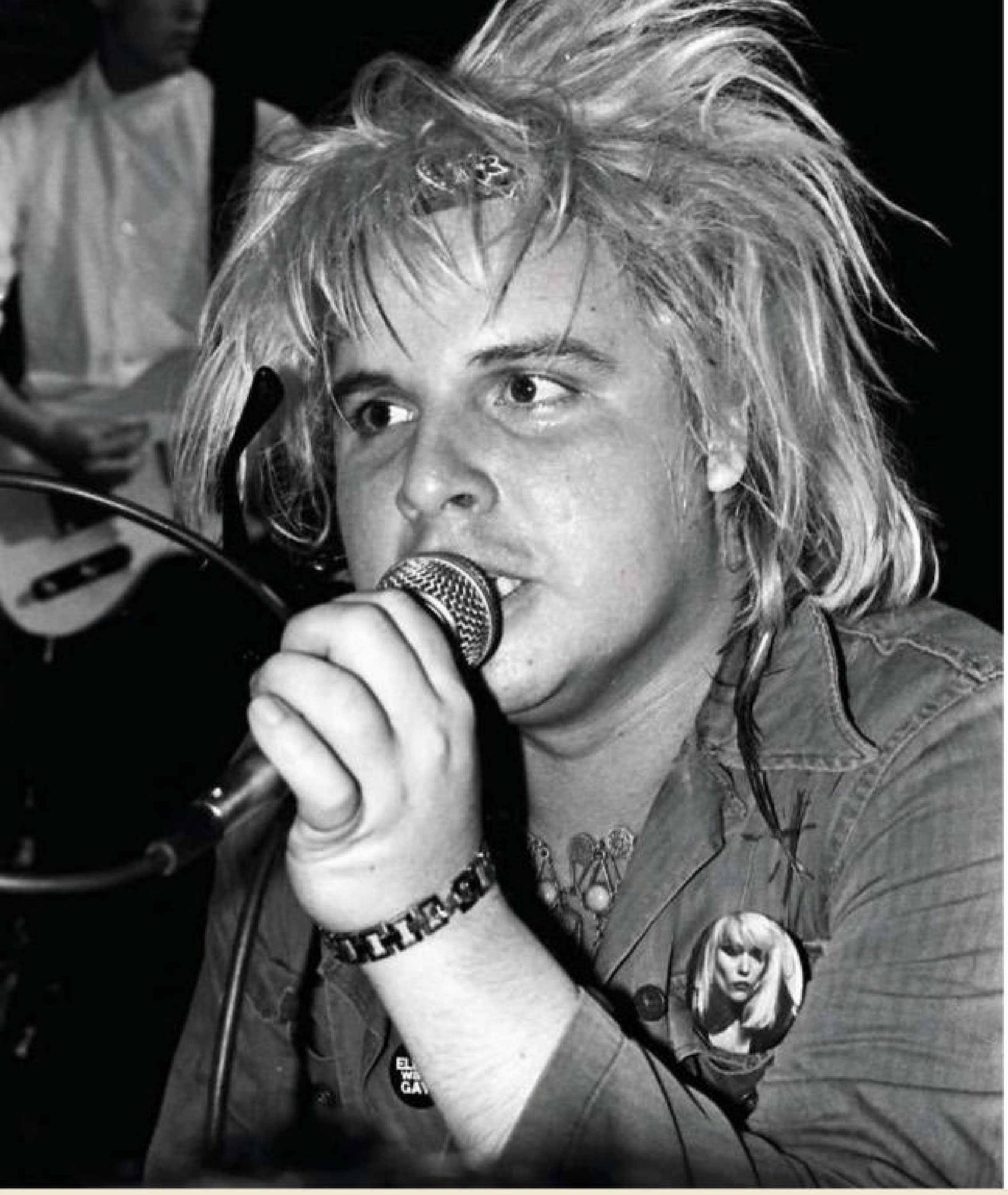
Ed Colver



Terry Graham: Jeffrey Lee Pierce and Kid Congo Powers, who was just Brian Tristan back then, started the band as The Creeping Ritual in 1979. In a very real way, The Gun Club was an East LA band, a Hispanic band. They were cultural misfits.

Kid Congo Powers: The Creeping Ritual was quite literally when I first picked up a guitar. Jeffrey had got Don Snowden to play bass, and Brad Dunning, another friend who had never played, to do the drums.

Keith Morris: One of my best friends grew up in Northridge, in San Fernando Valley, and he says he saw Jeffrey walking around the neighbourhood dressed as a member of the SS, just to piss people off. There are a lot of indigenous southern Californians out there, ➢



“JEFFREY’S SINGING VOICE WAS A GENUINE HOWL FROM WITHIN.”

Kid Congo Powers

Ed Colver (2), Bobby Grossman, David Arnoff, Peter ANderson, Getty (3)

◄ some white working-class… being the kid that’s mixed [race: Pierce’s mother was Mexican] means that he’s mixed up. It means that he’s living a form of the blues.

KCP: The Creeping Ritual was post-punk, with reggae and blues. I’d just come back from New York and was infatuated with Pat Place of James Chance’s Contortions, who played slide guitar with open tuning – very sonic, very expressionistic. I got it completely wrong but it became ‘the style’ – a conglomeration of R&B, reggae and blues, a crash of genres into post-punk music.

TG: Jeff and Kid started hanging out with us in this LA punk scene in ’77. In the midst of LA where there’s so much money and sunlight, we were this group of nihilistic misfits. But Jeff was obviously a very intelligent person. He would talk your ear off.

KCP: Jeffrey’s singing voice was a genuine howl from within. He was singing like that in the earliest days, and the more he did it, the more intense it got. Whatever demons he had, he was able to unleash them. Some people thought it was horrible caterwauling, and other people, it would make their hair stand on end. I knew it was off-key. Effect was king, and idea.

KM: Jeffrey was also writing reggae and punk rock reviews for Slash magazine, and he reviewed Black Flag in Polliwog Park [in July ’79]. We became drinking buddies, and at a certain point my mom moved out of the house where I was living in South Central, and I invited him to move in. Jeffrey was into it because you could walk two blocks to [popular blues venue] the Five Torches, and see Ike and Tina Turner play, or B.B. King.

KCP: From the start, we were doing Sex Beat, Black Train, and a dirgey version of Goodbye Johnny, with a slow hypnotic reggae groove. We were also doing Slippin’ Into Darkness by War, which cleared the room many times. We were doing folk songs, too – Railroad Girl, Hang Down Willie Brown, and some a cappella field holler. Jeffrey was pretty encyclopaedic, and he was finding out more all the time.

Chris D.: I knew Jeffrey because I also wrote reviews for Slash. The Cramps were a huge influence on him. But Jeffrey made it personal. Even if he was narrating about a racist bounty hunter, or some voodoo priest, he got deep into those characters and embodied them. William Faulkner was a big reference, and other Southern writers like Harry Crews.

KCP: I had known The Cramps a bit in New York, and we got friendly with them when they came to LA. I wrote the song For The Love Of Ivy, obviously about Poison Ivy [Rorschach, guitarist]. Jeffrey loved Lux’s stance. In his memoir, Jeffrey talks about our friend Don Waller [of counterculture ’zine Back Door Man] saying to him, “Tell ’em what they *don’t* want to hear”, and that becoming his mantra. His songs are about psychotic love, heroin, or people using racial epithets. It’s using all that as a weapon, whether it’s in bad taste or not – a conscious effort to be transgressive.

KM: At that stage, the band was sloppy and Jeffrey’s energy kind of filled the void. He’d run his course with Creeping Ritual, and he said, “Keith, I’m starting a new band, and I need a name for it.” I had a list of 10 pretty unusable band names, but I said, “How about The Gun Club?” He just lit up. He said, “I’ll trade you a song for the name.” Jeffrey basically rewrote a Disney song, (*sings*) “It’s a small world after all” and called it Group Sex, and we named the album after the song.

TG: The Bags was a fairly straightahead, crazy punk band, but eventually we had a meltdown. So, the bass player Rob Ritter and I went from club to club to find another band to join. One night [on May 19, 1980], Jeff’s band was playing at the Hong Kong Café. I hate to admit it, but I thought, “This is probably not going to be good”, because Jeff always seemed like the kid who was a day late and a dollar short. He was never quite there with the rest of us. But I swear, by the second song, I’m like, “Wow – Rob, are you hearing this?” And he was like, “This is really kind of unique”. After the show, we talked and Jeffrey said, “Well, it turns out that our drummer and our bass player – this is their last show!”

KCP: Suddenly things went into a higher gear. Terry and Rob were a ready-made rhythm section, locally successful. The music got faster, more trim; and more rockabilly, blues and Americana influences came in. I was astonished, and Jeffrey was too – like, “Oh, we have a *band*”.

KM: The Gun Club were always a great experience live, because you didn’t know what you’d get. Jeffrey probably out of his mind, drunk, abusive, screaming at the crowd, getting them riled to the point where they wanted to kill him.

Jim Sclavunos: In New York, The Gun Club had some very enthusiastic advocates. On the West Coast I think some people regarded Jeffrey as a wannabe, a pest on the scene. Like, he was the president of the Blondie fan club, why’s he now

MIAMI
THE GUN CLUB
GUN CLUB
DEATH PARTY

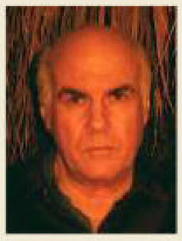
Shooting up: (opposite page, clockwise from top left) Blondie fan club prez Jeffrey at Club Lingerie, Hollywood; Pierce on TV Party with (from right) Chris Stein, Tav Falco and host Glenn O'Brien, 1980; tour bus glamour, '82; Pierce and Kid Congo reunited, London, 1988; (this page) The Gun Club (from left) Dotson (obscured), Pierce, Graham and Ritter rock the Whisky A Go Go, West Hollywood, '81: (insets) *Miami* and Death Party.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- **Kid Congo Powers (Gun Club/ Cramps guitarist)**

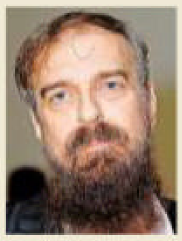
- **Terry Graham (The Bags/Gun Club drummer)**

- **Keith Morris (Black Flag/Circle Jerks singer, Jeffrey Lee Pierce's roommate)**



- **Chris D. (Flesh Eaters singer, *Fire Of Love* producer)**

- **Lois Graham (Terry's wife, backing vocalist)**



- **Jim Sclavunos (Teenage Jesus/8 Eyed Spy drummer, shared bills with The Gun Club)**

presenting himself as Robert Johnson? To me, Jeffrey seemed like a really interesting guy, taking a very different perspective on the blues and gospel traditions, mixing it in with a Southern Gothic sensibility, with spiritualism and voodoo, and doing it in a way that wasn't hokey.

KCP: It was all happening, then [in November '80] Lux and Ivy asked me to be in The Cramps. I said to Jeffrey, "Ooo, I don't want to leave you in the lurch, but…"

TG: We said to Kid, "They may take your brain out and eat it, but just go!" It was also good for us, because we brought in Ward Dotson, from Orange County, and he really had his roots music chops down. He knew blues, rockabilly, country & western, so for us he was the glue that really helped to bind the music together. Our attitude when we joined the band was it seemed like a revolving door situation with musicians, so when we made the record we thought, "Great, this'll be our statement, then we'll move on."

CD: Tito Larriva [guitarist from LA Latino punks The Plugz] produced the first session for *Fire Of Love* [in May '81], and I think Tito's label Fatima financed it, intending to release five or six tracks as an EP, but then they ran out of money. At Slash, the editor and publisher Bob Biggs had started a record company, putting out the Germs' *GI* and *Los Angeles* by X, and I ended up being A&R and in-house producer, with virtually zero budget.

In early May '81, Jeffrey gave me the stuff he'd done with Tito, which astounded me – light years beyond what I'd seen live. Jeffrey was also good friends with Robin Weiss, the secretary at Slash, and Robin also loved the tape. Robin and I basically persuaded Bob to let me record some additional tracks, and we could put the two things together as an album. We actually remixed the Tito-produced stuff, with Tito, so it all sounded of a piece.

TG: Everybody was just running on instinct, making the best of these raw ingredients with a $2,000 budget. Chris was actually a taskmaster, carefully orchestrating whatever he was hearing. Like, "Play hard on the drums, as if it's a live show!" For [Tommy Johnson's] Cool Drink Of Water Blues, Jeffrey had a length of chain, and he was like, "What if I hit this chain on the floor?" Jeffrey also brought in some recordings of insects at night, and we included those.

Lois Graham: There weren't many of us there in the studio, so when they needed backing vocals on a couple of tracks, we all had to chant and yell.

KM: Jeffrey sounds like he's possessed on that record. Who knows what he's going to do? People had not heard anything like that. A lot of us grew up with Howlin' Wolf, and the old blues guys – he took that and created this whole new genre. He was able to uproot this area somewhere down in the South, then just dump it in West Hollywood, in front of the Whisky A Go Go.

TG: We were quite proud of *Fire Of Love*. We just assumed that no one would ever hear it, but it got us to Europe, and we made two more records [with Chris Stein – 1982's *Miami* and 1983's Death Party EP], and things got crazy on tour. Sometimes we would stretch [Robert Johnson's] Preaching The Blues out for eight or nine minutes. I'd look around the stage and, oh, Jeffrey's not there any more! Ah, there he is, lying on the front of it, half on and half off! Whatever his condition, Jeff never lost a beat. He was never confused by where he was, in the music.

CD: The record didn't sell well at first [on release in November '81]. It took several years to pick up speed, but to Jeffrey's credit he continued. He got to Europe and Australia, and that's a key factor in the album's legacy enduring.

TG: For me personally, there were no lifestyle issues – I didn't even drink. Rob was a heroin addict… It was an 'every man for himself' kind of feeling, like it's not up to me to tell people what to do or not to do. Our responsibility was to play on-stage, and everyone did that. With Jeff, I never saw him other than drinking, but his vision was far stronger than any drug he may have taken. People still write to me and say, "*Fire Of Love* got me through this horrible situation", and I'm like, "Really? It *helped*?"

KM: I'm forever grateful that Jeffrey will always be my friend. I was shocked when Jeffrey died [in 1996], but at some point we're going to hook back up, set the garbage can on fire, and roll it down the biggest hill we can find so it crashes into the West Hollywood Sheriff's Department.

The Gun Club's 7-inch singles box set Preaching The Blues is out on January 21 on Flood Gallery.

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT.

Behind her fringe, under her covers, trading as CAT POWER, she's the indie icon who flew under the radar. Now she's singing the songs of Billie Holiday and Nick Cave, are we – ironically – seeing the real Chan Marshall at last? "I always thought it would be beautiful to play in complete darkness," she tells VICTORIA SEGAL. Portrait: ELIOT LEE HAZEL.

CHAN MARSHALL IS GREAT AT IMPRESSIONS. First, there's the mockney rock star one she uses to start our interview, advertising her openness to questions. "I'm here for the PEOPLE!" she shouts. Later, she lapses into an excellent Patti Smith, issuing advice – as Smith once did to an overwhelmed Marshall – on the "re*spaaahns*ibility" that comes with being an artist. Meanwhile, anyone who has heard Cat Power's adoring Bob Dylan pastiche Song To Bobby will already know Marshall has his phrasing down, but it's still delightful to hear her slide into his speaking voice as she recalls their 2007 meeting backstage at one of his Paris shows: "What you doin' in town? You recordin' or playin'? You got the band with you or solo? You got the same name as Charlie Parker's wife…"

Yet when it comes to Cat Power's three albums of cover versions – 2000's *The Covers Record*, 2008's *Jukebox* and, now, the nonchalantly titled *Covers* – the last thing on offer is impersonation. Instead, *Covers* underlines Marshall's ability to drill right into the emotional core of other people's songs – Iggy Pop's The Endless Sea, Frank Ocean's Bad Religion, A Pair Of Brown Eyes by The Pogues – and to make them sound as if they have always belonged in her voice.

"Whenever Chan plays guitar and sings," says Dirty Three drummer Jim White, who first played with Cat Power on 1998's haunted, ardent *Moon Pix*, "the music is all there."

WHILE CHAN MARSHALL'S REPUTATION SOUNDLY rests on albums rooted in her own songwriting – 1996's fractured, furious *What Would The Community Think*, for example, or 2006's *The Greatest*, recorded with a blue-chip band of Memphis soul musicians – her covers records are anything but stopgaps. For Marshall, these curations and interpretations of other people's songs are central to her work.

"When you are a little girl – I mean, you're a virgin, 12 or 18, a little girl or a boy – you have a zillion trazillion favourite songs in your life that you love for whatever reason," she explains. "Even in your twenties, there are all these favourite songs. My list of ➢

Eliot Lee Hazel

With the lights out: Chan Marshall sees Cat Power in the darkness, 2018.

Rock-A-Teens
YOU ARE CAT POWER FREE
THE GREATEST
CAT POWER
SUN

The Wanderer: (from left) Chan Marshall in 1996; Cat Power performing on-stage at All Tomorrow's Parties, Camber Sands, April 4, 2004; (insets, from top) albums *You Are Free*; *The Greatest*; *Sun*.

≺ songs – it's not for this record, it's just like my whole life. There's always going to be covers records if I can survive, as long as I can live. It's my favourite thing to do."

Marshall is currently at home in Miami where she lives with her six-year-old son. The musician known during her early-'90s appearances in Manhattan's downtown art scene for wearing "my old-man shoes and my old-man slacks" is currently sitting among the "pink and sparkly" detritus of a 40th birthday party she hosted for a "girly-girly" friend last night.

"Our kids were with her husband and it was my whole orchestration so it's a mess down here on the dining table," she says. "It was six of us, we wore sexy pyjamas with high heels, and oh, we had so much fun. We did our nails. We danced. She wanted Spice Girls and No Doubt and Oasis. And Dylan."

There's no Bob Dylan on *Covers* – nor any Spice Girls – but the songs Marshall has recorded are, she feels, part of a vital archive, a way of capturing the "improvisational selfless energy" that comes when a band hone a handful of beloved covers over a tour, or when Marshall, multi-tasking as producer and musician, uses a song to test the studio set-up. "It's like this huge vital thing – you can access unknowing energy. It really is so powerful because nobody knows what the fuck they're doing."

More than that, she has a need to document.

"There are so many covers I've done that I've not recorded. There are so many songs of my own I've played a million times and never recorded them. I feel it's important to document. Otherwise I'll forget. I can't remember all of them because I didn't fucking record them."

MARSHALL'S CHOICES ARE AS PERSONAL AS ANY self-penned Cat Power tune. For instance: the beautiful, bottom-of-a-glass version of The Replacements' bleakly alcoholic Here Comes A Regular. "I used to go to this bar specifically in New York to hear that song in the afternoon because no one would be there and that was on the jukebox," Marshall recalls dreamily. "Mona's: I named my dog after Mona. I love The Replacements so much. I got to see them – Paul Westerberg came out solo and played [*Let It Be* album track] Answering Machine and I lost my mind."

The song is also a blurry shadow of the time she spent – as she repeatedly describes it – "living in a bottle", a period that began after 2003's *You Are Free*. "The love of my life, he became schizophrenic and became an addict," she explains, softly, "and that's when I decided I was going to actively become an alcoholic. He'd been in and out of jail and psychiatric hospital and I watched him disintegrate. He was always on the run or on the street, nobody knew where to find him. And that pain, that agony – that fresh agony – that's when I made a deal with myself. I'm. Going. To. Live. In. A. Bottle. And that's what happened until the week when *The Greatest* came out."

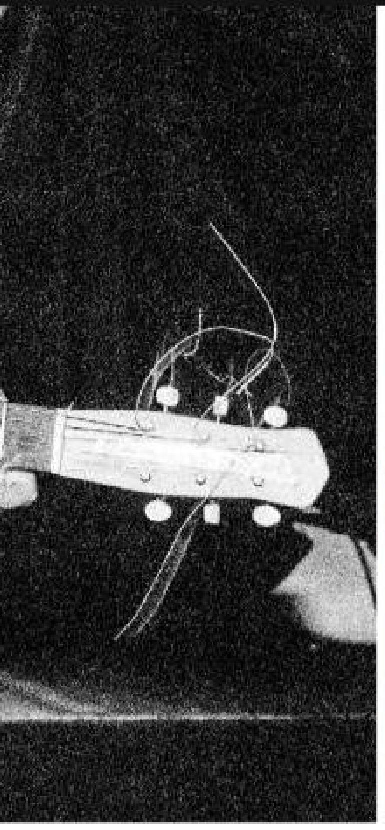
It was a period that culminated in a frightening breakdown. "I was on different medications, to stay on tour and you know, keep working, and I wanted to die, I wanted to fucking die. I was alone for four days. I didn't sleep for four days. I was on an experimental antidepressant. They should never have given me that. I needed to go to rehab is what I needed to do. No one was saying that. And I just was saying goodbye when I heard a knock at my door and it was my friend [painter] Susanna Vapnek. And she started to cry and she took me to the hospital and I basically detoxed for six days. When I got out, I felt like a seven-year-old kid that had just been born."

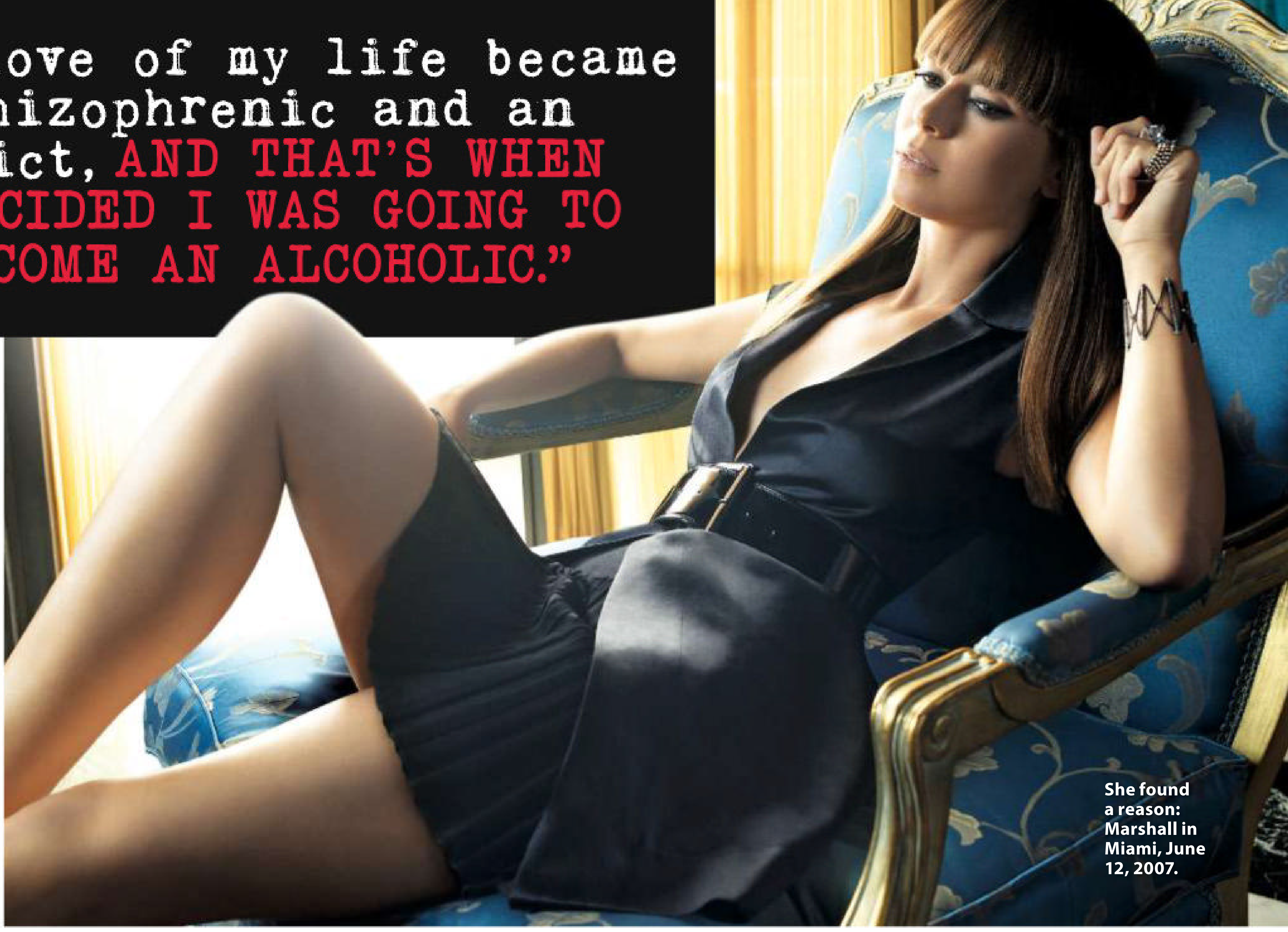
On *Covers*, Marshall takes on Sammy Fain and Irving Kahal's 1938 ballad I'll Be Seeing You, most closely associated with Billie Holiday. Marshall first sang her version at the memorial service for her friend, fashion designer Benjamin Cho, who died in 2017. In 2019, there was another sombre request for it after the death of Philippe Zdar, half of French dance duo Cassius and mixer of her atypically electronic 2012 album *Sun*.

"His wife asked if I wanted to sing at his funeral in Montmartre," she relates, "and I sang it to her in the studio." The lines, "I'll be looking at the moon/But I'll be seeing you" were particularly resonant: in the couple's bedroom, the moon could be seen through the

Renaud Monfourny, Getty (2)

"The love of my life became schizophrenic and an addict, AND THAT'S WHEN I DECIDED I WAS GOING TO BECOME AN ALCOHOLIC."





She found a reason: Marshall in Miami, June 12, 2007.

glass ceiling. "I wanted to record it for her and for anyone who has a devastating loss. So that's why I wanted to put that on the record – for those who have to continue to walk on the earth. That never ends, that loss."

TWO MORE SONGS ON *COVERS* BEAR SUBTLE TRACES of Marshall's recent history: White Mustang by Lana Del Rey ("a sister") and Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds' I Had A Dream, Joe. When Marshall handed her tenth album, *Wanderer*, to her label Matador – the home for all of her records since *What Would The Community Think* – she was told they wouldn't be releasing it. "I don't want to talk about them, to be honest." She clears her throat. "I never had a manager – I only got a manager after my son was born. It was just me and the label. I've learned a lot by them dropping me. It was rough. Emotionally, honestly. That's why I don't like to talk about that because it's not about the financial – it's about friendship. Sometimes friendship is all you have and I guess it means a lot more to some people than others. To some people, it's just like a bargaining chip."

Marshall was lost, at one point planning a move to Australia. Then she received three significant phone calls. "One was from Nick Cave's people: 'Nick wants you to open up for him in San Francisco and Los Angeles.' Of course, it was a no-brainer, but it meant so much to me because I was… my family kicked me off the label, you know?" She sighs. "And then Lana – I became friends with Lana because she played Miami and she asked me to go to Europe on tour."

The third was from a friend who'd landed a job with a luxury fashion brand. "I had been living off my two credit cards," says Marshall, "but she asked if I could perform at a private company dinner and that offer paid both of my credit cards off. And that month, when I was there to do that, is when I signed to Domino. The night that I signed that thing, I also signed the paper to remove me legally from the other company. The tears… I just collapsed."

The embattled *Wanderer*, then, with Del Rey's guest vocals on the defiant Woman, is special to Marshall, a vindication that showed a way forward.

"It's like a totem for me," she says. "Maybe I would have been broken before I had my son, but this life-force energy just hit me hard and I was like a lion mother. I was stronger than I'd ever been with that record. I felt I was creating some sort of permanence."

That security, however, remains hard-fought. Marshall has just finished an arena tour with Garbage and Alanis Morissette. "Because I hadn't worked since 2019, I had 38 dollars in my bank account when I showed up for the first show," she admits. "It was the third time I've ever been on a bill with only females. We had a great time."

Her tourmates were excited to have her on board. "Chan Marshall is the last of the true bohemians," Garbage's Shirley Manson tells MOJO. "A wild, untethered spirit marching entirely to the beat of her own drum." The tour also liberated Marshall from an unexpected domestic complication: her son cries every time she plays her own songs at home.

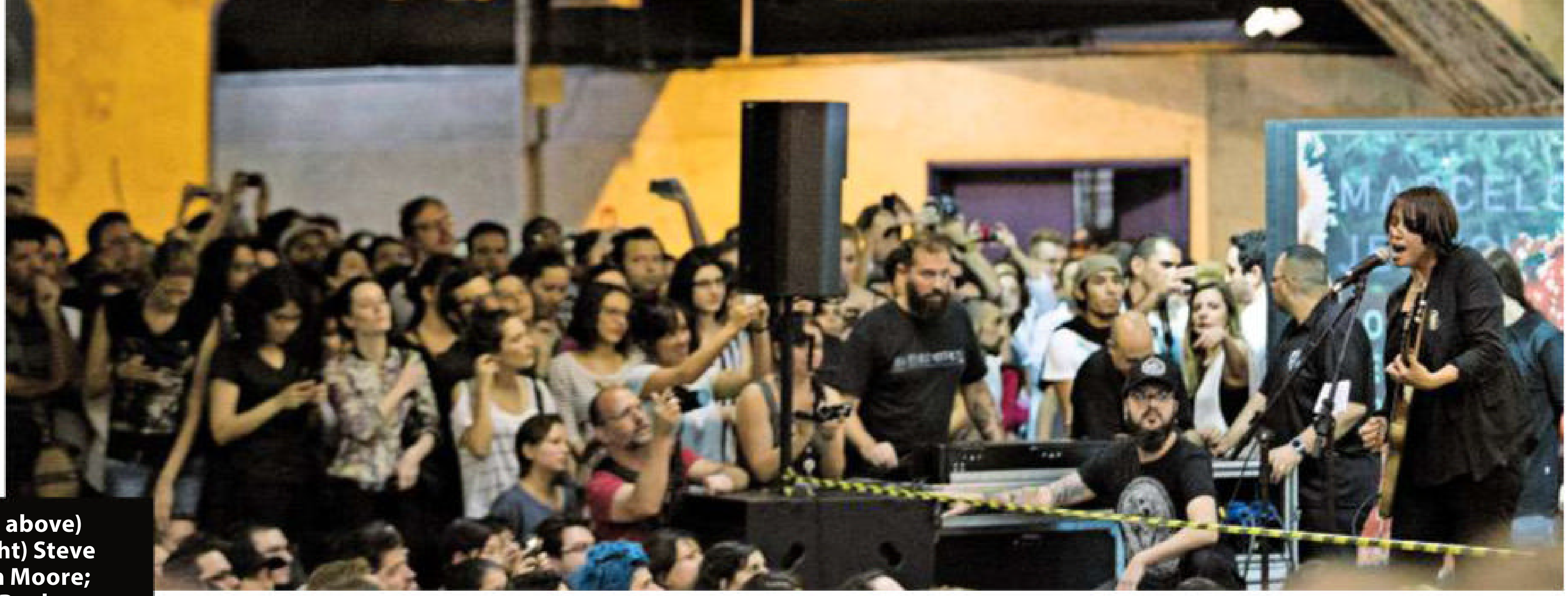
"He was able to articulate a couple of years ago, like, 'Mom, I don't like beautiful music. It makes me sad.' So the whole pandemic, forget it – if it's not rock'n'roll, it ain't happening. I had to be a little Jerry Lee, sing with a man's voice on the acoustic, we would do beatbox challenges. But no, I cannot do my own stuff at home."

By the time she went on the tour, "I was so excited to fucking sing and play again. It felt really good and natural and comfortable. It was exactly what I needed."

THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES, HOWEVER, WHEN A performer seems to have been the very last thing Chan Marshall needed to be. Following a turbulent childhood – "13 schools in 10 years" – Marshall left her hometown Atlanta in 1991 after losing friends to AIDS, a car crash, and the heroin wrecking the scene where she and her friends first played as Cat Power. "Everyone's a junkie and I'm getting the fuck out of here, right?" she says, "'Cos I'm not dumb."

She moved to New York with her friend Glen Thrasher, who introduced her to the downtown scene. "He kept taking me to these, like, free jazz places. Everyone's older; no one's really rock'n'roll punk posturing. They're just fucking working shit out. And that's when he said, 'You know, we can play here anytime.' There's a naked Japanese woman with this dude playing saxophone, everyone's got their eyes closed. It was a no-brainer because it was like art, you know. There were no plans, man. There were no plans."

She worked five jobs, ate rice, occasionally stole parmesan ➢



Love and communication: (clockwise from above) early Cat Power collaborators (left and right) Steve Shelley and Tim Foljahn flanking Thurston Moore; Marshall plays Paraíso Metro Station, São Paulo, November 27, 2014; with Neil Young at the Bridge School Benefit, October 25, 2008; with Bill Callahan, 1998; fringe benefits: Chan Marshall today; Cat Power on The Tonight Show, February 28, 2008 (from left) Erik Paparazzi, Jim White, Marshall, Judah Bauer; (insets below) *Myra Lee*; *Moon Pix*.

CAT POWER / MOON PIX

"I'd never looked at the audience before. I walked out and – HOLY FUCK! – I SAW I WAS CLEARLY NOT ALONE."

< cheese and cans of tuna ("I'm not proud") and was finally, fatefully booked to support Liz Phair on the day Kurt Cobain died. It was here she was "discovered" by Sonic Youth drummer Steve Shelley and Two Dollar Guitar's Tim Foljahn.

"She was completely unique at that point," says Foljahn today. "Her phrasing and the subtleties in her performance and her emotion that she could get across. The breaking voice and hyper-intimate performance. The structure of stuff, the drone-like quality – it had a mesmerising effect. There was this strong fragility."

Marshall recalls Foljahn and Shelley coming backstage to see her: "'What's your name, your band? Where do you live? Where are you from? Are you on a record label? Are those your songs? Do you have other songs?' And I was so overwhelmed. I couldn't look people in the eye back then, I was so nuts and so shy, so fucking shy. And then they said, 'Are you hungry? We're going to this great Mexican place around the corner.' So we're eating the Mexican food and all of a sudden, the conversation starts going, 'Kim and Thurston, Kim and Thurston' and I look over at Steve and I realised: 'Oh my god, it's Steve Shelley from Sonic Youth,' and I just left. I was so embarrassed."

Foljahn won her back over when he told her Shelley wanted to "jam". "Jamming," says Marshall. "That is my middle name. I come from Atlanta, that's what we do. Everybody gets off their shift at work at 2am, we all go to whoever's basement or whoever's living room, and we just jam, you know. It took six weeks for me to feel comfortable enough with him to jam with him and Steve, and that was when Steve started saying, 'I like these songs. Would you ever want to record?'"

The result was Cat Power's thrillingly downbeat 1995 debut *Dear Sir* and the detuned angst of follow-up *Myra Lee*, recorded contemporaneously in Sonic Youth's Mott Street basement, before the trio headed to Memphis for 1996's creative leap forward *What Would The Community Think*.

"She thought that overdubbing her voice was cheating, she didn't like it," recalls Foljahn. "She tried it and then she was, 'Oh.' And you could see that this was the beginning of this whole thing, when she started to get the idea of the studio in her head and what was possible. She wanted rolling feedback on one song and I was just rocking around with this big old hollow-body guitar, doing all this grunting and groaning, and it really wasn't happening. She just went in and killed it. Never done it before, and just did it. That was

Courtesy of Tim Foljahn, Alamy, Getty

very common. She would do stuff she'd never done before and amaze everybody."

EVER SINCE MARSHALL BEGAN playing as Cat Power, she has wanted to play with the lights off. "It's always been a huge fantasy," she explains. "Maybe one candle in the audience, or one lamp for them not to bump into shit. I always thought it would be beautiful to have complete darkness." Her reputation as a volatile and troubled live performer – "trainwreck," she says, resignedly – followed her throughout the '90s as she started songs and stopped them, sometimes weeping.

"I liked that sometimes songs wouldn't get finished," says White, who played as part of Marshall's live band from *Moon Pix* onwards. "I thought if she wasn't feeling it, she would move on. I didn't see a problem – it wasn't good if it wasn't good – but it wasn't *not* good because of that."

"Imagine being told you're crazy all the time," says Marshall. "You're doing something really personal – it's so fucking personal – give me a break. Like, I wish I was a punk drummer or whatever but I'm not."

She tells a harrowing story about the now-notorious show she played to promote *Moon Pix* at New York's Bowery Ballroom in 1999, where the New York Times reviewer described her lying on the floor while audience members patted her consolingly. What they didn't know was that immediately before she went on-stage, she had been accosted by a man she knew from her youth. "He pulls up his shirt and he pulls out this semi-automatic handgun and he says to me, 'You're just like Kurt.'" Distracting him with a drink – "I knew he was on heroin and junkies love Coca-Cola" – Marshall ran to tell her label, who said "'Chan, you're fucking crazy, go play.'"

The whole show, Marshall could see the man moving through the crowd, closer and closer. "That's when I fell on the floor and crawled off-stage and that fucking document is what came out: 'She collapsed and had a nervous breakdown on-stage.' I've just been called crazy for so long – my whole career – because I've experienced things that they didn't have the bad luck to witness. I got blamed for *witnessing* things. I think that's super-common, especially for women and under-served communities, period."

On *Covers*, Marshall revisits one of her own songs. It's not the first time she's gone back into her catalogue, but this time, she's changed the title. Hate, *The Greatest*'s disturbing riff on Kurt Cobain's "I hate myself and I want to die", has now become Unhate, and been moved into the past tense.

"I do that with a lot of my songs now," says Marshall. "I change the lyrics because the song stays the same on a recording, but hopefully, we all keep growing and keep learning, and hopefully sharing our experiences can fucking give somebody else a step up."

Marshall says she feels "lucky" and "blessed" – grateful she could spend time with her son in the last 18 months, teaching him reading and maths. She has six typewriters and will one day write the book she's been thinking about for the past 15 years.

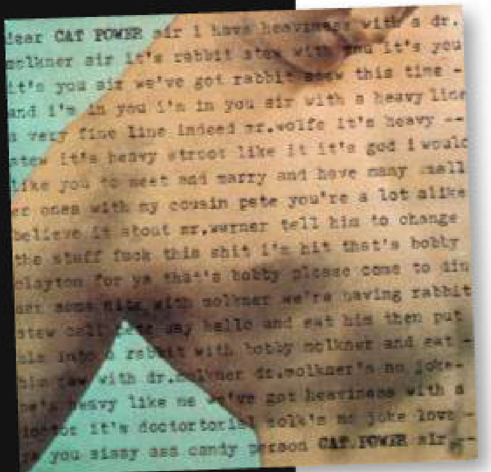
"Before *The Greatest*," she says, "I always wanted to give up music and go somewhere else and do something else. Always." Then she played the first date of *The Greatest* tour. "I'd never looked at the audience before. I walked out and – holy fuck! – I saw these human beings. I saw I was clearly not alone." She laughs. "Every person I could see as far as my eye could see was smiling at me. They welcomed me, they were there for me, and I realised that suicidal, 'can't look up, gotta have my bangs in my face' person was… not gone, but she grew up in that moment. She woke up. She was grateful and ready to get to work." Ⓜ

Getty, Chris Buck

Open to INTERPRETATION

Six of the best covers by Cat Power. Uncovered by VICTORIA SEGAL.

YESTERDAY IS HERE

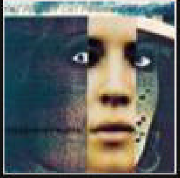


(from Dear Sir, 1995)

Southern transplant Marshall was already a wanderer when she recorded this vagabond farewell from Tom Waits's 1987 album *Franks Wild Years*. New York might promise a "hot meal" and "top hat", but this raw take suggests the train to get there is already out of steam.

BATHYSPHERE

(from What Would The Community Think, 1996)



This study in alienation was originally from Smog's 1995 album *Wild Love*, Marshall's former boyfriend Bill Callahan making a controlled descent into the depths. Cat Power's version hits the water with a wilder splash, and a needling electronic bleep enhancing the unease.

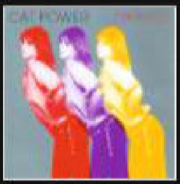
I FOUND A REASON

(from The Covers Record, 2000)

"It's beautiful, beautiful, beautiful," said Marshall's future collaborator Dave Grohl about this piano-based Velvet Underground cover, preferring it to the "hit": (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction. Using a few lyrical fragments, Marshall boils the original down to a pure salt of wishing and longing.

RAMBLIN' (WO)MAN

(from Jukebox, 2008)



Hank Williams' 1951 rejection of the settled life is utterly transformed on Marshall's second covers collection. Gone is the rough apology of the pathological rover; in its place is spacy, lush trip-hop-tinged soul, slipping silk-like through your fingers, impossible to tie down.

STAY

(from Wanderer, 2018)

The circular despair of Rihanna's 2013 hit made it a perfect fit for the restless questing of Cat Power's tenth album. It sounds like it belongs nowhere else – living proof of Marshall's ability to envelop a song entirely.

CAT POWER / COVERS
PASSPORT

BAD RELIGION

(from Covers, 2022)

Marshall started performing Frank Ocean's back-of-a-cab confessional on her 2018 Wanderer tour, this version switching its acute spiritual desolation for a low, exhausted world-weariness. Contains what might in another world be the quintessential Cat Power lyric: "Just outrun these demons, could you?"

1971 NUGGETS

FLOWER TRAVELLIN' BAND
ARMCHAIR BOOGIE
Michael Hurley & pals
Dory Previn Mythical Kings and Iguanas
HEADS HANDS & FEET
NRPS
ROCKIN' HORSE
YES IT IS
time and pla
jack bruce
harmony row
JOHN ST. FIELD/CONTROL

Buried treasure: Julie Driscoll marvels at 1971's yield of plenty.

WRITTEN BY John Aizlewood, Martin Aston, John Bungey, Stevie Chick, Dave DiMartino, Grayson Haver Currin, David Hutcheon, Jim Irvin, Colin Irwin, Dorian Lynskey, James McNair, Andrew Male, Andrew Perry, Jon Savage, David Sheppard, Michael Simmons, Lois Wilson.

Getty

IT WAS THE YEAR THAT HATCHED SOME OF THE LONGEST-REIGNING AND LEAST-DISPUTED GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME. BUT 1971 WAS SO GREAT, EVEN ITS LESSER-KNOWN GEMS ARE PRICELESS. MOJO'S CRATE-DIGGERS PRESENT 50 OF THEIR FAVOURITES.

WAS 1971 THE GREATEST YEAR IN MUSIC? Well, if it wasn't, it's up there, duking it out with a small handful of credible contenders. But the very very best – why not?

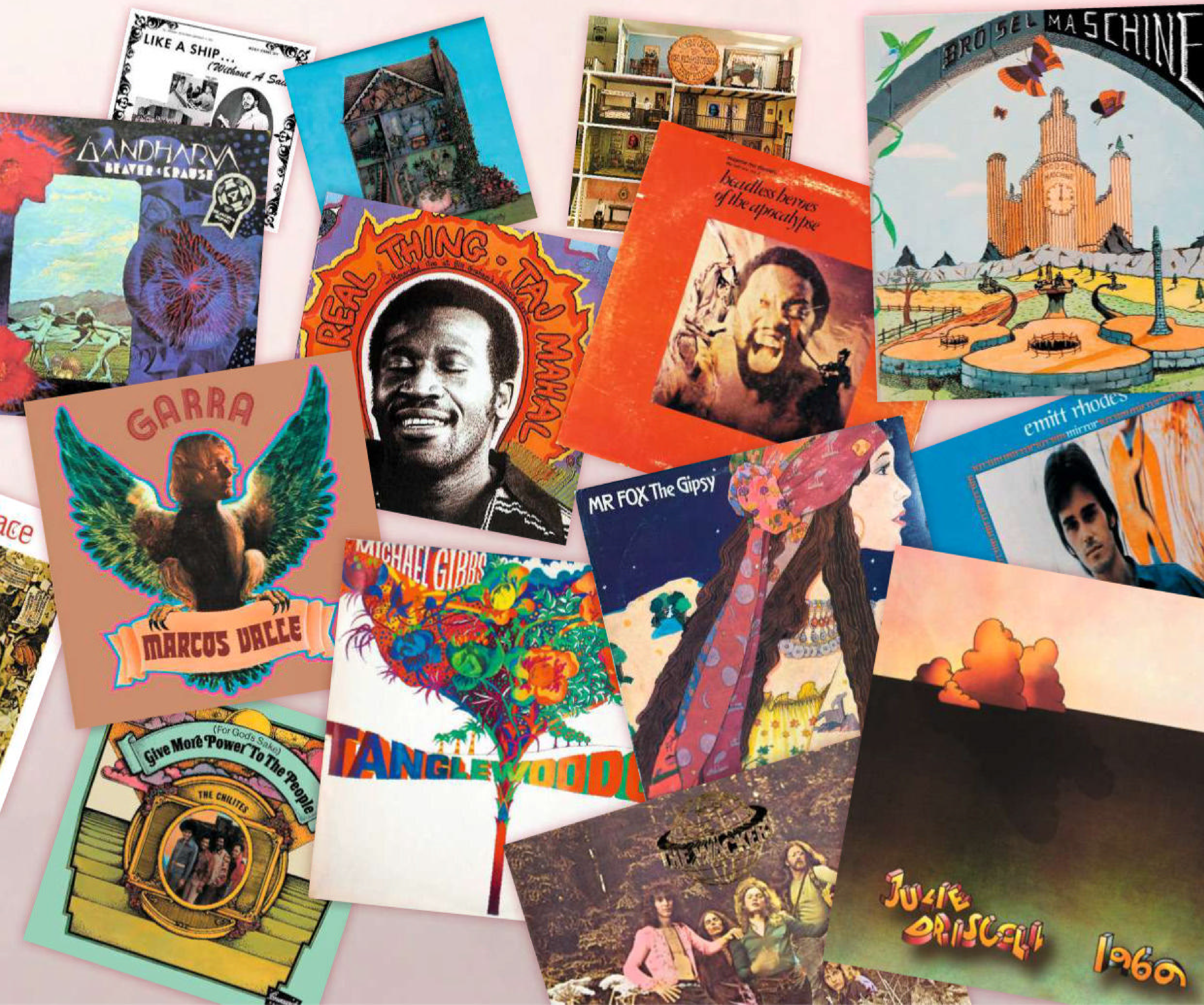
MOJO has spent much of 2021 marvelling at 1971's dazzling fecundity, running 50th Anniversary features on *Tapestry*, *What's Going On*, *Blue*, *Led Zeppelin IV*, *Hunky Dory*, *Maggot Brain*, *Ram* and *Sticky Fingers*, still staggered by their breadth, quality and innovations. In some of 1971's greatest albums – say, *Blue*, or Leonard Cohen's *Songs Of Love And Hate* – there was timely and abundant proof that pop could mature with its audience. Tangibly, too, there was a reckoning with the hopes and disappointments of the previous decade, variously encoded in David Crosby's *If I Could Only Remember My Name*, The Beach Boys' *Surf's Up*, Sly & The Family Stone's *There's A Riot Goin' On* and John Lennon's *Imagine*.

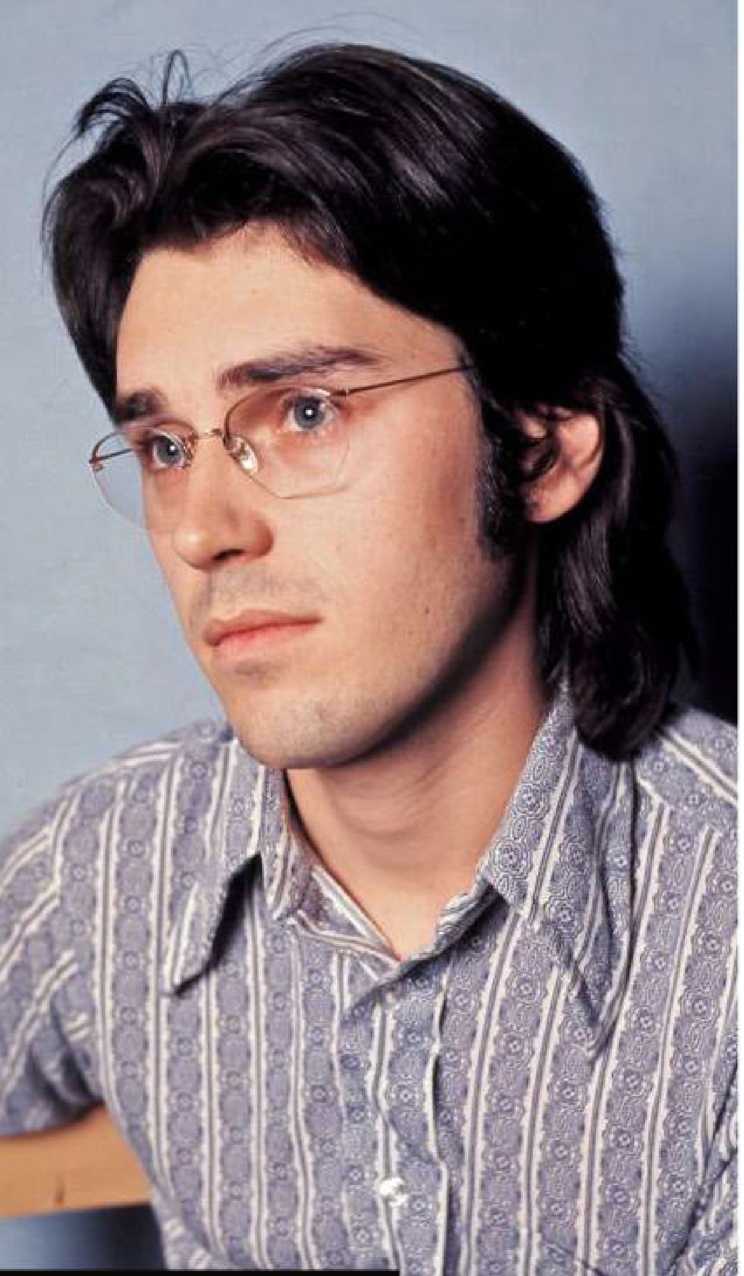
There were albums pointing up new routes forward: *Tago Mago*, *The Inner Mounting Flame*, *Weather Report*, Hawkwind's *In Search Of Space*. Others provided transformative new leases of life for the artists who made them: *Electric Warrior*, *Madman Across The Water*, *Every Picture Tells A Story*, *Meddle*. Prog imagined more and more sophisticated fusions: *Aqualung*, *Fragile*, *Nursery Cryme*, *In The Land Of Grey And Pink*. Elsewhere, eternal rock and roots verities were underlined by Little Feat, Link Wray, Ry Cooder, Groundhogs, MC5 and – many MOJO writers' pick for alt. LP Of 1971 – Flamin' Groovies' *Teenage Head*.

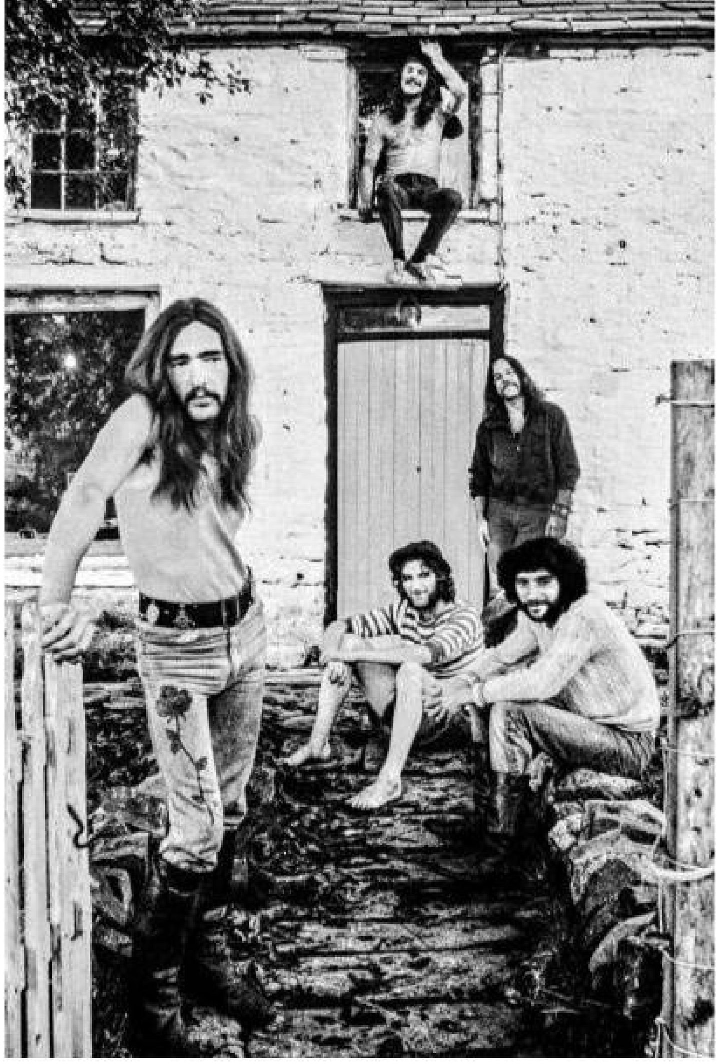
It was a bumper year for folk and folk-leaning singer-songwriters: Bill Fay, Anne Briggs, Karen Dalton, Bridget St John and Roy Harper. And a year when soul and R&B pushed the envelope, on *Aretha Live At Fillmore West*, Stevie Wonder's *Where I'm Coming From*, The Temptations' *Sky's The Limit*, Gil Scott-Heron's *Pieces Of A Man*, The Isley Brothers' *Givin' It Back*, and *Curtis/Live!*. There were *sui generis* masterpieces in Serge Gainsbourg's *Histoire De Melody Nelson* and *Nilsson Schmilsson*. There were just plain and simple masterpieces in *Who's Next*, *L.A. Woman*, *Master Of Reality*, *The Allman Brothers At Fillmore East*, *Muswell Hillbillies* and *The Low Spark Of High Heeled Boys*… And we've probably not even mentioned *your* favourite album from 1971.

But these were only the most visible peaks in the year's Himalayan array of musical achievements. And even from its foothills you can see for miles. We asked our writers for their Nuggets of 1971 and they came up with 50 (*50*!). Maybe you know them, perhaps you don't; maybe you'll agree, or disagree, or volunteer alternatives that are as great or greater. Maybe you'll have an argument for why 1981 was a better year, or 2001. In any case, we welcome your feedback…

➢







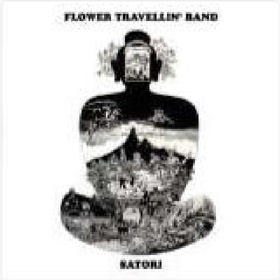
Lions after slumber: some of 1971's greatest belated hits (from left) Emitt Rhodes, Michel Polnareff, Heads Hands & Feet, Taj Mahal, John Cale.

Barry Plummer, Getty (2), Alamy, DALLE/APRF

FLOWER TRAVELLIN' BAND

SATORI

(Atlantic)

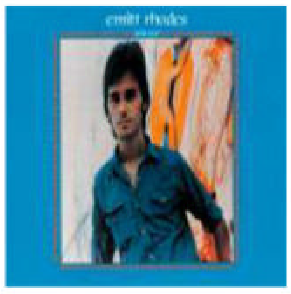


Described in Julian Cope's Japrocksampler as "the Can of heavy rock", this Tokyo collective were depicted on the cover of their 1970 debut, *Anywhere*, as a biker gang riding naked through the countryside. It was the following year's *Satori*, however, which fully delivered on that image of freedom in the wild. It begins like Black Sabbath transposing tightly controlled Hindu ragas onto screaming electric guitar, handled by hot fret-mangler Hideki Ishima, before unpredictably chicaning into prog tempo changes, *musique concrète* and, on side two, bone-crunching free-rock jams – the Far Eastern flipside, perhaps, of the real Can's 1971 masterpiece, *Tago Mago*. *AP*

EMITT RHODES

MIRROR

(ABC/Dunhill)



There is absolute joy and pure darkness in the second solo album from the West Coast's one-man Beatles. Already behind and burnt out on a vicious six-albums-in-three-years contract, Rhodes spent nine months recording this conflicted pop monograph, playing every single instrument and overloading songs with optimistic pop hooks. Yet exhaustion and mental illness were closing in. Imagine a DIY doppelgänger of Paul McCartney's solo debut, with pop playfulness reflected back as dread and self-doubt. As Rhodes himself sings on the haunting title track, "Hollow empty face/ One side dark, one light… the mirror always knows." *AM*

PASTOR T.L. BARRETT AND THE YOUTH FOR CHRIST CHOIR

LIKE A SHIP (WITHOUT A SAIL)

(Mt. Zion Gospel Productions)

LIKE A SHIP…
(Without A Sail)

Though Barrett's influence in Chicago has been significant – congregation alumni Maurice White and Donny Hathaway would have testified to that – his albums were forgotten beyond the city limits until reissued by Light In The Attic, and more recently, Numero Group. With Phil Upchurch and Gene Barge participating, the debut LP by the preacher and his choir of teens is as powerful and soulful as gospel gets. Unrepentant sinners will find the spirit moving through them and the call-and-response too intense to resist. Barrett's life is 'colourful', to say the least, but if you've never ventured beyond the Soul Stirrers, make this your next port of call. *DH*

HALFNELSON

HALFNELSON

(Bearsville)

Curiously, there was little demand for angular, Weimar-style pop with falsetto vocals in 1971 California. No matter, the brothers Mael (Ron and Russell) and Mankey (Earle and Jim), plus drummer Harley Feinstein, caught the eye of producer Todd Rundgren. He tidied up their much-rejected, album-length demo, and the only Halfnelson album quietly emerged. A year later, band and album were re-titled Sparks. Wonder Girl was the near US hit, but Simple Ballet, Slowboat and, especially, (No More) Mr Nice Guys are as fabulous as anything the Maels would do over the next half-century. *JA*

MICHEL POLNAREFF

POLNAREFF'S

(Disc AZ)

polnareff's

Following the suicide of his friend, record producer Lucien Morisse, 26-year-old yé-yé pop star Polnareff went into Abbey Road to record this multi-layered, baroque pop plea for artistic, sexual and social freedom. Utilising the studio's early quadrophonic system, plus full orchestra, Minimoog and a similar band line-up to Serge Gainsbourg's *Histoire De Melody Nelson*, *Polnareff's* includes weird orchestral funk, fuzzed guitar rock, existential soul-brass ruminations on the Algerian war, and a haunting farewell to Morisse, Qui A Tué Grand-Maman. The strain was too much and the sessions ended with a nervous breakdown, but Polnareff's place in French pop culture was sealed. *AM*

HEADS HANDS & FEET

HEADS HANDS & FEET

(Capitol)

HEADS HANDS & FEET

Formed when Telecaster ace Albert Lee and a young Chas 'Gertcha!' Hodges teamed with members of folk-psych act Poet And The One Man Band, HH&F were an evanescent wonder: six London and Home Counties dudes fixated on US roots and country. That's exemplified by Lee's wizard flat-picking workout Country Boy, but limpid, elegant ballads were also a speciality (Look At The World It's Changing; the Jimmy Webb-indebted Delaware). But it's modulating beauty Song For Suzie, tenderly sung by Tony Colton, which ensures the LP's Nugget status. "So much grace in every second of that track," says The Waterboys' Mike Scott today. "A masterpiece." *JMcN*

EUGENE McDANIELS

HEADLESS HEROES OF THE APOCALYPSE

(Atlantic)

A dark meditation upon an America riven by violence, drugs and inequality, by a veteran songwriter/producer who'd worked with Bobby Hutcherson and Roberta Flack (to whom the album is dedicated): *Headless Heroes* is 40 minutes of sulphurous, psychedelic jazz and soul, topped with McDaniels' wry takedowns of rich kids posing as flower children (Susan Jane), the impotence of the counterculture (Freedom Death Dance) and, on bleak, unsettling epic The Parasite, the genocidal bloodshed of America's first white settlers. Pressure from Nixon's White House curtailed promotion of the album, but hip-hop's crate-digging beat-makers later rescued this uncompromising gem from obscurity. *SC*

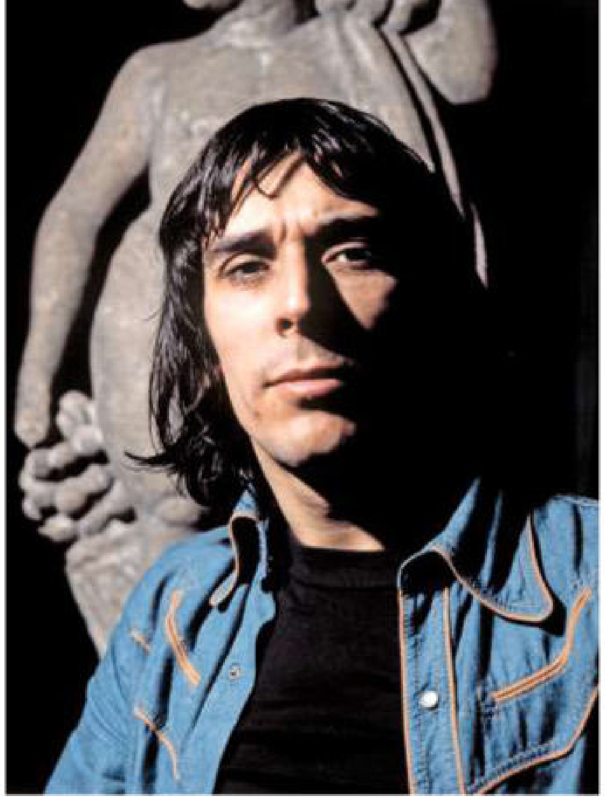
JULIE DRISCOLL

1969

(Polydor)

Julie Driscoll 1969

Singer Driscoll's wondrous versatility has never been in doubt – she's been all over the place since her early Brian Auger days – but if it were all to be packed in one place proudly, it would be here, her first solo album, backed by new hubby Keith Tippett's extraordinary combo and the still staggering Blossom Toes. Between Tippett's powerhouse, accessible arrangements (cf. also, that year's *Dedicated To You, But You Weren't Listening* set), the Toes' unique textures, and an ear-ripping guitar solo by Chris Spedding on opener A New Awakening, we are presented with what may be Driscoll's most adventurous – and accessible – effort ever. Near miraculous. *DDiM*



BEAVER & KRAUSE

GANDHARVA

(Warner Bros)

GANDHARVA
BEAVER & KRAUSE

The gold here is the Gandharva suite on the old side two, a 20-minute meditation that travels through several states of blissed-out rapture before dissolving into pure sound. The stars are the baritone sax of jazz veteran Gerry Mulligan, Paul Beaver playing the pipe organ of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, and the cathedral itself, a cavernous space whose seven-second delay time contributes so much to the ethereal atmosphere. They're abetted by electric guitar, synthesizer, flute and a woman playing two harps simultaneously. No one had made a record that sounded like this before; plenty of New Age composers have since tried to replicate its celestial vibe but few have come close. *JBun*

TAJ MAHAL

THE REAL THING

(CBS)

THE REAL THING · TAJ MAHAL

Henry St Claire Fredericks Jr, AKA Taj Mahal, pushed blues into the future and birthed African-Americana with this 2-LP set live at the Fillmore East. Featuring Mahal on his trademark National guitar and backed by heavy hitters including John Simon on piano and John Hall on guitar, the twist was the four-man brass section arranged by jazz legend Howard Johnson – on some tracks, all four play tuba. A cover of Blind Willie Johnson's You're Gonna Need Somebody On Your Bond, and original Tom And Sally Drake – a cooking instrumental duet with Mahal on banjo and Johnson on tuba – star. *MSi*

MR FOX

THE GIPSY

(Transatlantic)

MR FOX The Gipsy

British folk rock's black sheep, Mr Fox were a maverick blend of Carole Pegg's distinctively English fiddle and restless vocals with the gritty dynamism of her husband Bob, steeped in the folk tradition and inspired by it to write colourful originals. On this second and final album a fierce rhythm section (Barry Lyons on bass, Alun Eden on drums) stokes a frantic, almost psychedelic sound. The epic 13-minute title track relates a love-lorn journey through the Yorkshire Dales, Mendle is darkly mysterious, Dancing Song joyously celebrates the morris tradition, and Pegg even goes all folk-rap on Aunt Lucy Broadwood. Wondrous. *CI*

> **"CHURCH OF ANTHRAX IS A SHIMMERING, IMMERSIVE TRADE-OFF BETWEEN JOHN CALE'S INEXORABLE OSTINATO PIANO AND TERRY RILEY'S TAPE-DELAYED SAX ARABESQUES."**

NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE

NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE

(Columbia)

In lieu of a new Grateful Dead studio record, the sparkling debut by this Dead affiliate ticked all the boxes: pedal steel (courtesy of Jerry Garcia), ecological warnings (Garden Of Eden; Last Lonely Eagle), love on the road (Portland Woman; Louisiana Lady), stoner escapades (Henry) and, on Dirty Business, the album's nearly eight-minute story of a tragic miners strike set to scorching feedback. With pop smarts, psychedelic touches and country rock grooves, the New Riders defined the direction of the San Franciscan scene at its slow fade. But they would not reach these heights again. *JS*

JACK BRUCE

HARMONY ROW

(Polydor)

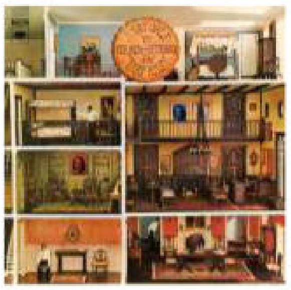
jack bruce
harmony row

The great bass player once told MOJO that he wrote this in a single afternoon, sat at his piano with a spliff. Named after a street near where he grew up in Glasgow, and self-produced, it compresses all his enthusiasms – jazz, blues, folk, classical music (there are hints of Schubert) and bossa nova – into a beguiling suite of songs that, while they cover many bases, perfectly encapsulate Bruce's singular style, buoyed by the mischievously warped words of his longtime collaborator, Pete Brown, and sterling musical support from guitarist Chris Spedding and drummer John Marshall. File under: "Better than Cream". *JI*

JOHN CALE & TERRY RILEY

CHURCH OF ANTHRAX

(CBS)



Fellow travellers in the '60s US avant-garde, Cale first encountered Riley while working in La Monte Young's Dream Syndicate, and later, having quit the Velvet Underground to produce Nico and The Stooges, he would turn to the proto-

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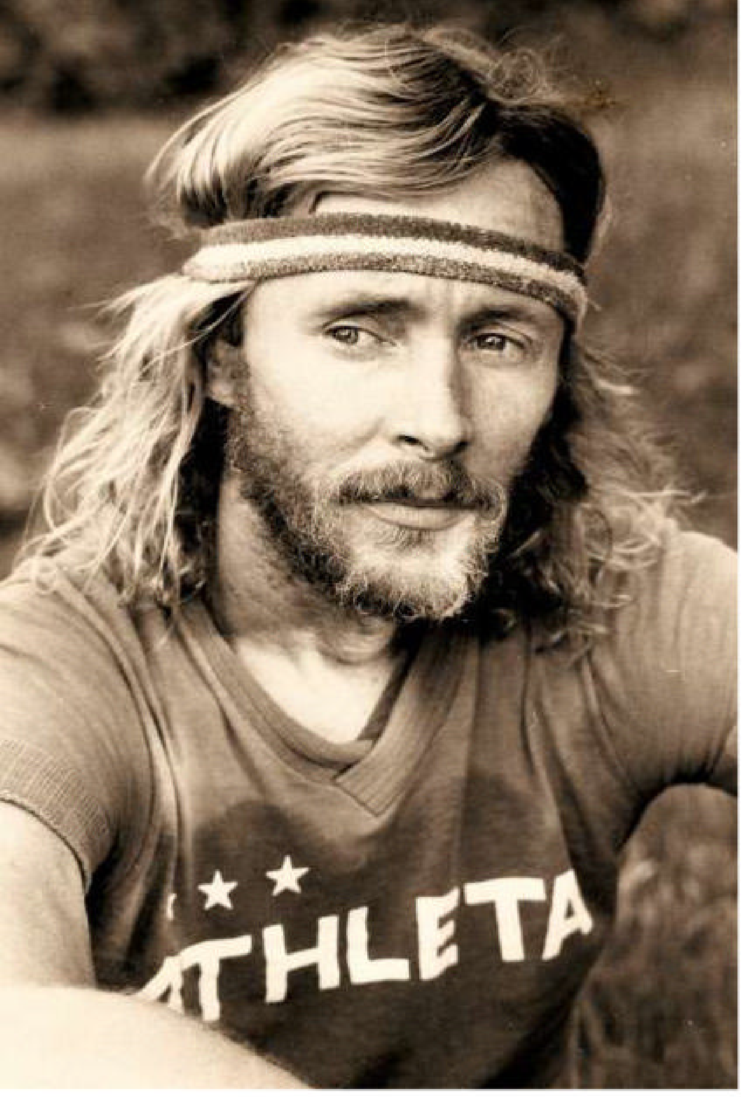
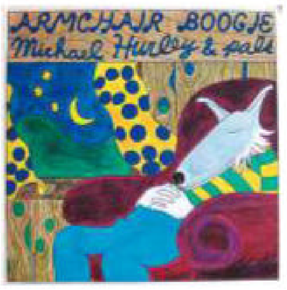


minimalist composer to co-helm this innovative statement. Cut in three days, the album is a compelling triangulation of classical, prog rock and free jazz elements playing out over four extended, improvised instrumentals and one brief song. Its centrepiece, The Hall Of Mirrors In The Palace At Versailles – a shimmering, immersive trade-off between Cale's inexorable ostinato piano and Riley's tape-delayed soprano sax arabesques – anticipates much contemporary ambient/post-classical music. *DS*

MICHAEL HURLEY & PALS

ARMCHAIR BOOGIE

(Raccoon/Warner Bros)



In an era of arena rock and sensitive singer-songwriters, this gleefully obscure music hovered in the distance like an unidentified object. While only 29, Hurley sounded 100 and quirked about werewolves and English noblemen, as well as getting "buggered" by his lady, with simple folk instrumental support from members of The Youngbloods and the Holy Modal Rounders. With eccentric touches including a cover of the Ink Spots' chestnut When The Swallows Come Back To Capistrano and a comic strip insert drawn by Hurley himself, the whole package bordered the hippy underground and old weird America, dubbed 'freak folk' 30 years later. *MSi*

THE WACKERS

WACKERING HEIGHTS

(Elektra)

Eureka, CA quintet The Wackers could scarcely have been more 1971, on the cusp of CSNY, Badfinger, powerpop and proto-glam. For a bunch of harmony-heavy Californians, *Wackering Heights* is indeed wacky at heart; cue a cover of Elvis's Don't Be Cruel, a gritty saxophone pepping up I Don't Want My Love Refused, a bubblegum chorus of "boom-a-lang-a-shoo-lang" in Don't Put Down The Singer. The songs were uniformly terrific, producer Gary Usher (Beach Boys/Byrds) added his trademark finesse, and tastemakers Elektra released the album – so was the band name, suggestive of a comedy troupe rather than groovy rock-popsters, a factor in the album's underwhelming reception? *MA*

Courtesy of Light In The Attic Records, Getty (3)

LEE MOSES

TIME AND PLACE

(Maple)

time and place

From Atlanta, Georgia, Moses was a soul singer with a tremendous scream: as a fledgling, he impressed Gladys Knight enough for her to try to poach him for the Pips, and he also played with a pre-fame Hendrix. Produced by Johnny Brantley and recorded live in the studio with members of the Ohio Players and his own backing band The Disciples, his sole album is an astonishing piece: a rough-hewn splurge of intense emotion (the title track; What You Don't Want Me To Be) and deep funk (Would You Give Up Everything) with Moses investing everything to devastating effect. *LW*

MICHAEL GIBBS

TANGLEWOOD 63

(Deram)

MICHAEL GIBBS
TANGLEWOOD 63

A composer, arranger and trombone player born in what was then Rhodesia, Gibbs trained at Berklee in the US before moving to the UK in 1964, where he played with John Dankworth, Mike Westbrook and others, before cutting two marvellous, searching, big-band albums of his own for Deram, joined by Jack Bruce, Chris Spedding and other top Britjazzers. The joyful, barrelling title tune (later covered by Colosseum) is offset by the scratchy, blaring funk of Five For England and the hushed, experimental Canticle. The psychedelic sleeve may have wrong-footed contemporary listeners who missed an avant-jazz classic. *JI*

DORY PREVIN

MYTHICAL KINGS AND IGUANAS

(Mediarts/United Artists)

After her husband André left her for Mia Farrow, Hollywood songwriter Previn was institutionalised and turned to autobiography as a form of therapy. On her most inviting release, she comes across like a Robert Altman character, or a female Leonard Cohen raised on country music and showtunes, sweetening her tales of depression and abuse with agile melodies and laughter in the dark. Standout track Lady With The Braid is a flawless psychological portrait of a lonely woman navigating a one-night stand, Previn's voice snapping between brittle, affected cool and naked desperation: "Would you care to stay a while and save my life?" *DL*

JAN DUKES DE GREY

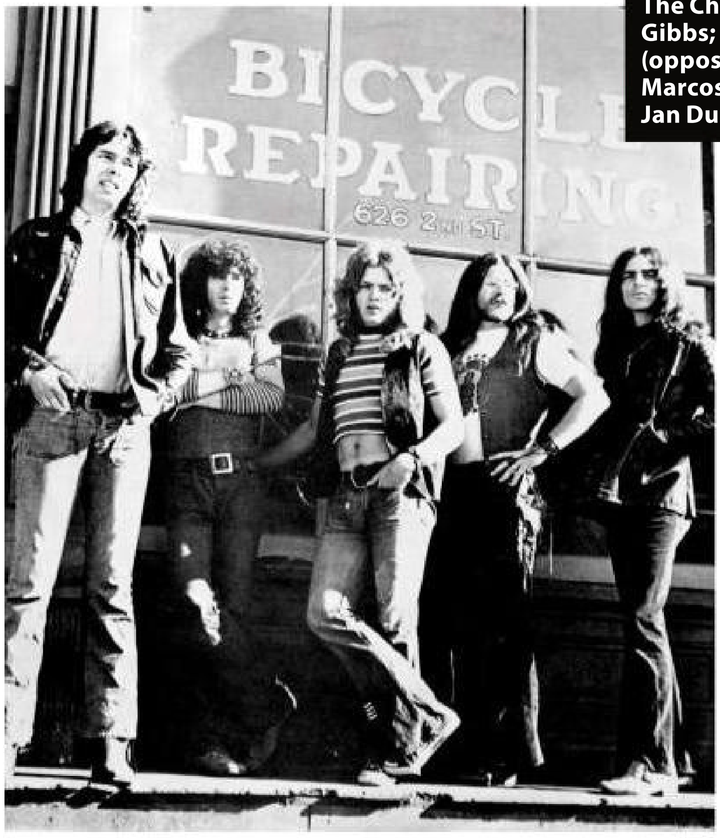
MICE AND RATS IN THE LOFT

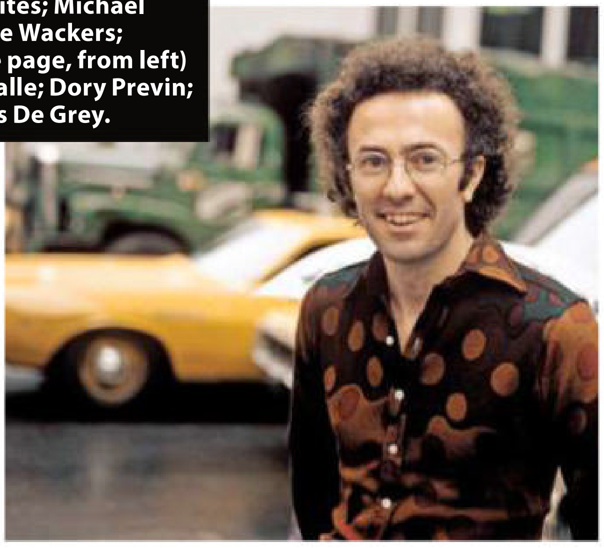
(Transatlantic)

If acid folk had its own theme park, Sun Symphonica – the 19-minute epic that opens this short-lived Leeds trio's ecstatic masterpiece – would be its roller-coaster ride, spiralling through a horrifying haunted house and a zany hall of mirrors before emptying blissfully into the "sunshine", as singer Derek Noy repeatedly warbles as if half-strangled. These careening 40 minutes channel The Doors and Jethro Tull, Pharoah Sanders and Robbie Basho, forever sprinting left when you expect them to saunter right. In one of this curio's choicer reissues, Current 93's David Tibet called Jan Dukes De Grey "a hit squad affiliated to Father Yod". *GHC*

> **"JAN DUKES DE GREY CHANNEL THE DOORS AND JETHRO TULL, PHAROAH SANDERS AND ROBBIE BASHO, FOREVER SPRINTING LEFT WHEN YOU EXPECT THEM TO SAUNTER RIGHT."**

Holiday Inn
NEW GOLDEN EAGLE
ERTAINMENT





It was a very good year: (clockwise from above) The Chi-Lites; Michael Gibbs; The Wackers; (opposite page, from left) Marcos Valle; Dory Previn; Jan Dukes De Grey.

ROCKIN' HORSE

YES IT IS

(Philips)

ROCKIN' HORSE

In 1970 Jimmy Campbell recorded the superlative *Half Baked* with Billy Kinsley, then returned to the studio to put down this act of homage to the '60s Liverpool sound they'd both helped shape: Campbell in The Kirkbys and The 23rd Turnoff; Kinsley in The Merseybeats and The Merseys. Mixing Brill Building melody, jangly-to-crunching guitars and pop concision with a sadness that pervaded everything Campbell did, songs such as I'm Trying To Forget You and Don't You Think I Ever Cry made waves in early-'70s New York – both The Raspberries and Ramones were fans – but despite its brilliance, *Yes It Is* has flown under the radar ever since. *LW*

MARCOS VALLE

GARRA

(Odeon)

GARRA
MARCOS VALLE

Were he listening, Paul McCartney would have been wondering if he could please have his ball back. Arriving in the Rio beach boy's golden period, *Garra* stands comparison with the greatest efforts of Valle's globally-fêted, pop-minded peers. Yes, they can write tunes this good, but imagine if they also had the palette of a Brazilian heritage for added colour, while writing about being a hippy bum making a fortune writing commercial ditties. There's not a wasted second: Valle sliding gracefully from samba to easy listening to orchestral pop to psychedelic funk to West Coast sunshine harmonies. A genius at his peak. *DH*

THE CHI-LITES

(FOR GOD'S SAKE) GIVE MORE POWER TO THE PEOPLE

(Brunswick)

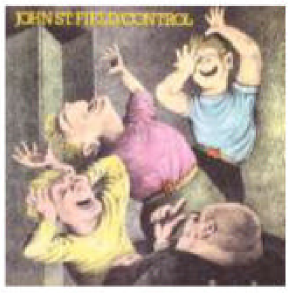
Give More Power To The People
THE CHI-LITES

Chicago's answer to The Temptations hit their creative peak. The title track, with its berserk synth fanfare and storm-force harmonies, and the pro-integration ultimatum We Are Neighbors, are spirited examples of Black Power's mainstream moment, calling on America to "cut this jive" with a nod to Motown maestro Norman Whitfield. At the other extreme, there's the ethereal rue of breakthrough hit Have You Seen Her. You can sense writer-producer-frontman Eugene Record surveying the waterfront of early-'70s soul and vowing to prove he could do a bit of everything. All this and 1971's finest use of parentheses. *DL*

JOHN ST. FIELD

CONTROL

(Movieplay… eventually)



Recorded "following an intense period of taking LSD" and credited to John St. Field "because I was in a little trouble with the forces of law and order", Jackie Leven's self-produced debut was a beauty. From the irresistible near-madrigal Soft Lowland Tongue to the 11-minute epic The Problem via the multi-part Raerona and the deranged Dune Voices experiment, the 20-year-old exuded craft and wisdom. Although Leven would not make another album for eight traumatic years, his yearning voice, elegiac lyrics ("You could kill me, baby, with the trust in your eyes") and way with a heroic chorus foreshadowed his Doll By Doll and subsequent solo years. *JA*

BRÖSELMASCHINE

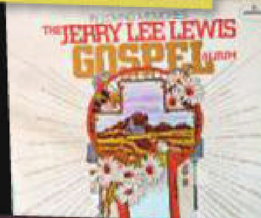
BRÖSELMASCHINE

(Pilz)

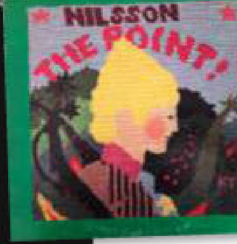
BRÖSELMASCHINE

'Kraut-folk' was never a 'thing', thus restricting exposure for this exquisitely languid fusion straight out of a Duisburg hippy commune. 'Crumbling Machine' (alluding to a cannabis grinder) didn't hide their confessed Pentangle influence; Jenni Schücker and Willi Kissmer were the light female/dark male vocal blend, Kissmer and Peter Bursch the electric/acoustic tangle of guitars. Devotion to the British folk rock model extended to covering the trad Scots ballad Lassie, though originals such as Gedanken and The Old Man's Song were equally nuanced, hitting peak Bröselmaschine with the 10-minute Schmetterling, adding German spoken word, tabla and sitar for heightened kosmische vibes. *MA*

THE NEXT 25...



Linda Lewis
Say no more

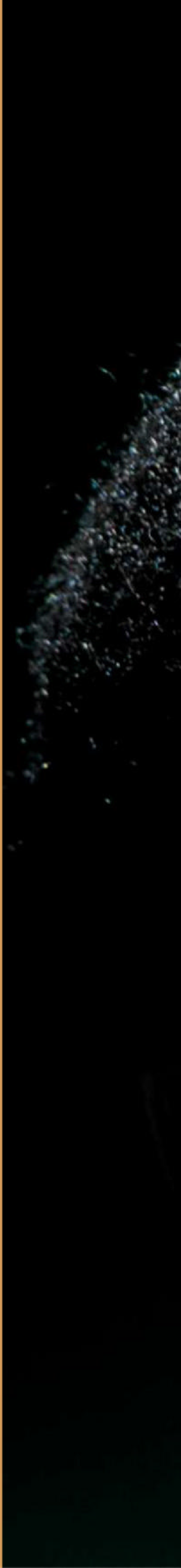


ERNIE GRAHAM *Ernie Graham* (LIBERTY)
BRONCO *Ace Of Sunlight* (ISLAND)
LABI SIFFRE *The Singer & The Song* (PYE INTERNATIONAL)
DAVE EVANS *The Words In Between* (THE VILLAGE THING)
TONTO'S EXPANDING HEAD BAND *Zero Time* (EMBRYO/ATLANTIC)
GORDON HASKELL *It Is And It Isn't* (ATCO)
CHICO BUARQUE *Construção* (PHILIPS)
ROGER TILLISON *Roger Tillison's Album* (ATCO)
JERRY LEE LEWIS *In Loving Memories (The Jerry Lee Lewis Gospel Album)* (MERCURY)
LINDA HOYLE *Pieces Of Me* (VERTIGO)
PAUL SIEBEL *Jack-Knife Gypsy* (ELEKTRA)
COCHISE *Swallow Tales* (LIBERTY/UNITED ARTISTS)
SHELAGH McDONALD *Stargazer* (B&C)
CENTIPEDE *Septober Energy* (RCA / NEON)
KEITH CHRISTMAS *Pigmy* (B&C RECORDS)
STEVE GOODMAN *Steve Goodman* (BUDDHA)
LINDA LEWIS *Say No More* (REPRISE)
HOME *Pause For A Hoarse Horse* (CBS)
SUPERSISTER *To The Highest Bidder* (DANDELION/POLYDOR)
STEVE TILSTON *An Acoustic Confusion* (THE VILLAGE THING)
HAPPY END *Kazemachi Roman* (URC)
FUCHSIA *Fuchsia* (PEGASUS)
MIKE WESTBROOK *Metropolis* (RCA/NEON)
HARRY NILSSON *The Point!* (RCA)
CATHERINE HOWE *What A Beautiful Place* (REFLECTION)

OVER TO YOU! Want to sing the praises of a 1971 album that we missed? Or speak your love for one we've mentioned? Or tell us we're drongos for missing off Ramases' *Space Hymns*? Join us on Facebook and Twitter or e-mail mojoreaders@bauermedia.co.uk and mention 1971 Nuggets.

From a puritanical upbringing in the Mennonite faith, through educations in hip-hop and garage rock with CeeLo, Black Lips and Danger Mouse, future-soul seer **CURTIS HARDING** has learned the hardest lesson: how to be himself, definitions be damned. "I'm open to everything," he assures **DAVID FRICKE**.

Photograph by **JOSÉ COELHO**



Curtis Harding mostly remembers the silence – the sudden, absolute quiet that fell over Atlanta, Georgia, his hometown, when the pandemic hit the US in the spring of 2020. "Nobody knew what was going on, how long it was going to last," the singer-songwriter says in a deep, grainy voice. "There was no one in the streets, and I was in my little space."

He spent the first months "making fucking banana bread" and "reading a lot of James Baldwin." There was music too – "John Coltrane and old gospel records that I had from my mom," a singer in the Mennonite Church. Born in Saginaw, Michigan, Harding grew up on the move, into his early teens, as his mother Dorothy opened ministries across the country and performed at shows and services, often with Curtis, the youngest of her six children, who played drums and was gifted with a voice "high as shit," as he declares with a laugh.

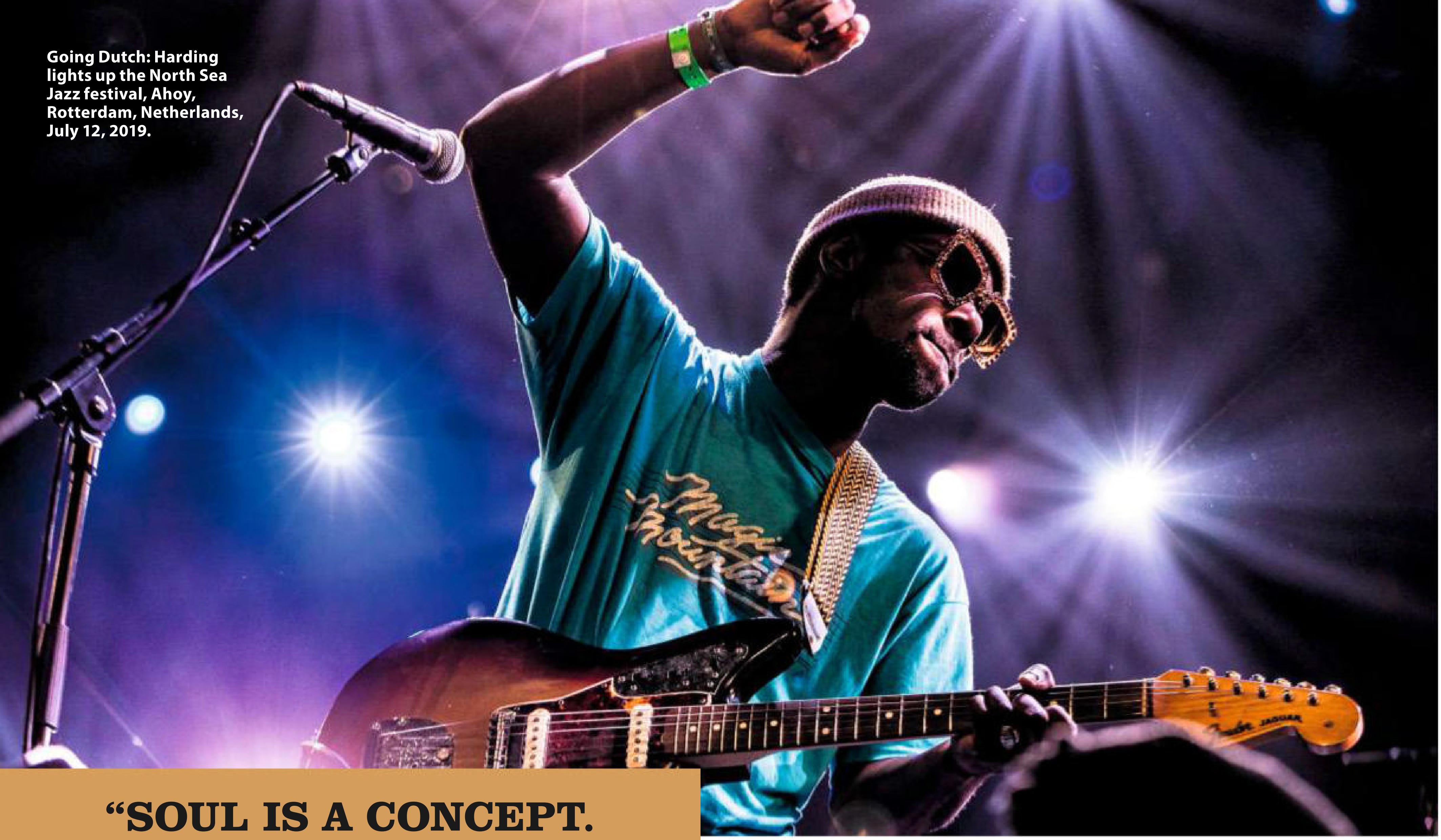
"But at some point," Harding continues, "I had to create, or I was going to go crazy." In the fall of 2020, he returned to an album he had recorded and handed over to his label just before lockdown – the follow-up to Harding's second solo release, 2017's *Face Your Fear*, a critically acclaimed union of earthy R&B and Afro-psychedelic spell – and tore it up, shelving half the songs. "I had a deadline, I felt rushed and it just didn't flow," he says in his defence. "I'm a stickler about having something you can put on from top to bottom."

To that end, Harding called his collaborator on *Face Your Fear*, New York-based rock producer and songwriter Sam Cohen. "Curtis was like, 'I've got a few new songs for the record – I want to come up and work on them,'" Cohen recalls. "He showed up with this raw nerve that had opened – Black Lives Matter, the experience of Covid, all that isolation – and dug into that. You could feel the album growing." ➤

Shutterstock

"Soul music can always become something else": Curtis Harding takes it higher, Paredes De Coura festival, Portugal, August 18, 2018.

Going Dutch: Harding lights up the North Sea Jazz festival, Ahoy, Rotterdam, Netherlands, July 12, 2019.



> **"SOUL IS A CONCEPT. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A MUSICIAN TO HAVE IT. IT'S ABOUT THE LIFE EXPERIENCES YOU HAVE."**
>
> **Curtis Harding**

I*F WORDS WERE FLOWERS* IS MORE THAN THE sumptuous, probing result of that anxiety. Named, Harding says, after "something all black mothers tell their children: basically, to choose your words wisely," the album is his breakout moment, definitively binding Harding's vocal awakening as a gospel prodigy and his early-2000s in the Atlanta rap scene – notably as a backing singer for CeeLo Green – into a highly personal, broadband ideal of vintage soul. The title overture's chaotic bouquet of choir and brass rolls right into Hopeful, a turbulent suite with funk-army force, Harding escalating his battered optimism with a hip-hop-preacher's fire draped in the orchestral vestments of Isaac Hayes' *Hot Buttered Soul* and Curtis Mayfield's *Roots*.

The guitar-driven stride of Can't Hide It – like a late-'60s Four Tops single backed by the '90s R.E.M. – and the Marvin Gaye-spaghetti Western ride The One come from the pre-lockdown version of the album. Explore, in turn, was recorded during Harding's last session with Cohen. A hip-hop stroll down the dark end of the street, it has mourning streaks of saxophone in an infinity pool of reverb with a long peal at the top of the track, inspired, Harding reveals, by the gladiator-like horn in Tina Turner's 1985 Mad Max theme, We Don't Need Another Hero.

"If you're making music deeply inspired by '60s or '70s soul, it doesn't need to sound like it's from that time," Cohen asserts, "with a guitar that's period-correct. Curtis is a music head, pulling from all over." Harding is frequently compared to the Texas singer Leon Bridges, actually a good friend, and the future-blues phenomenon Gary Clark, Jr. But Cohen notes that when he and Harding first met – introduced by the producer Danger Mouse at a *Face Your Fear* session – they swiftly bonded over a mutual love for *U.F.O.*, the 1969 album by acid-folk singer Jim Sullivan, and the strings on Scott Walker's '68 LP, *Scott 2*.

"It's like building a house," Harding contends. "You add different layers to it, but the foundation's always going to be there. It has to be strong to build on top of it." Soul, he insists, "is a concept. You don't have to be a musician to have it. It's about the life experiences you have.

"Yeah, it *is* soul," Harding says of *If Words Were Flowers*. "Because *I'm* soul."

ON THE WAY TO HIS 2014 SOLO DEBUT, *SOUL POWER*, Harding wrote a song with that title which he never got around to recording. "I used to play it live, but it got kind of lost in the mix," he says. Harding raps the opening lyrics to MOJO: "I'm ready and on my mark/Waitin' on this here dance to start/They got expensive shoes but I'm not gonna lose/Because they don't have half the heart."

"It wasn't about the music I was making," the singer contends. "It was about being able to move and push forward – to use that power we all have."

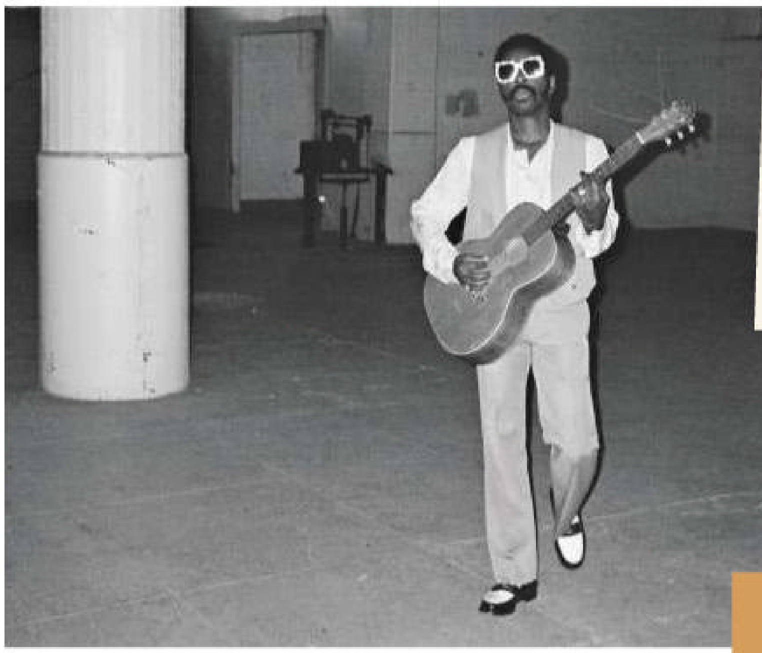
At 42, Harding is a late bloomer who never thought of music as a career when he sang with his mother ("I wanted to do normal shit like sports – or be an oceanographer") and looks back on his itinerant years with fondness, if some distance from the Mennonite faith: conservative and pacifist, extremely puritan in some branches but with an emphasis on community and service. "I'm not a religious person – definitely spiritual," Harding states firmly. "But I didn't realise how unusual my childhood was until later, especially as a black kid." (The Mennonite congregations he was part of were largely white.)

"There are some people who have never left their neighbourhood," Harding continues. "It's easy for me to pick up and go somewhere, meet new people and do new things. That's why my music sounds the way it does. I'm open to everything."

Members of the Lancaster Conference, a Mennonite fellowship that goes back to the 1700s in central Pennsylvania, Dorothy and Curtis Harding, Sr., a mechanical engineer, moved from Saginaw to Alabama when Curtis, Jr. was three, then made multiple stops in the South and West before settling in Atlanta. Harding listened to both gospel and hip-hop, the latter courtesy of an older sister's tape collection, got into rock and Atlanta's punk scene and was part of a rap act, Proseed, before getting a job doing promotion at LaFace Records, which is where he met CeeLo Green.

"He was the one who showed me that I could rap and sing at the same time – 'Hey, I don't have to pick one or the other,'" Harding

Courtesy of Curtis Harding (2), Getty, Matt Correia, Alamy



Moving on up: (clockwise from top left) jamming with Night Sun; Harding with Beck at Milan Fashion Week, 2019; with *If Words Were Flowers* producer Sam Cohen and Danger Mouse; crossing the tracks in US TV drama Hap And Leonard, 2018; Curtis: "if you follow your heart, things will happen".

says. Green also gave him a crash course on what was possible in progressive R&B when he took Harding along on the 2002 edition of the Smokin' Grooves festival, a touring package that included Outkast, Lauryn Hill and The Roots. "It was boot camp for real," Harding recalls, "learning how to perform, be comfortable in my own skin."

His time with Green was "insane", he concedes, at another level. On the road with Green and Danger Mouse's Gnarls Barkley project while trying to launch another band, The Constellations, "I was doing a little too much," he says. "I needed rehab or something. Every day was grey, even when it was sunny outside." In 2008, Harding moved to Toronto for a year and started writing the songs that eventually became *Soul Power*, which took off in Europe, charting in France and the Netherlands. "It goes to show you," Harding says, still amazed, "if you follow your heart and do what you feel is right, things will happen."

HARDING EXPECTED TO make *Face Your Fear* with Danger Mouse, but the producer threw him a curve by adding Cohen on the first day, leaving the two of them to record the rest of the LP after they all wrote and cut the opening track, Wednesday Morning Atonement. The singer had no idea of Cohen's session resumé, which runs from Norah Jones and The National to Shakira and the Grateful Dead's Bob Weir. But Cohen was immediately struck by Harding's swagger – "He was cool-lookin'" – and quick, certain way with a lyric and melody. "We'd be making instrumental stuff from scratch. Then he'd go outside, smoke cigarettes and write. He'd come back – 'Let me try a thing' – and it would be super-catchy and right."

Where Harding and Cohen were co-writers on *Face Your Fear*, Harding is the sole composer on *If Words Were Flowers*. "This record is the strongest example yet of the voice he's developing," says the producer. Harding's long road out of gospel, through hip-hop and even garage rock – Night Sun, a band he formed with members of Atlanta's Black Lips – "is what makes him special," says Cohen. "It's also why he's taken so long to break through. People don't know where to put him."

"All that stuff comes from the same tree," Harding claims. "The interesting thing about soul music is that it can always become something else. That's the beauty of what I do. Because I love so much other music, that's just what happens."

Harding is generous about the musicians to whom he's most often compared. Of Leon Bridges, he says "I love to see his progression, his take on things." And Gary Clark, Jr. "is a bad-ass dude. Although I haven't met him yet, I feel like we're brothers in what we're doing. But you can't measure your progress against somebody else's. You've got to do what you want to do.

"There's some calculations you have to make," Harding adds. "But if the product is you, man, you're good." Ⓜ

King CURTIS

Three steps to the throne of neo-soul, shadowed by **David Fricke**.

SOUL POWER

★★★

(Burger, 2014)

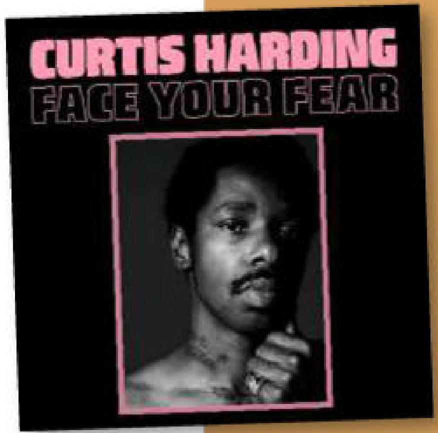
CURTIS HARDING
SOUL POWER

As advertised in the title, Harding's debut is emotionally focused R&B classicism, too bound to the fundamentals at times but seductive in its stark, taut arrangements. And Harding lets that falsetto fly over the Northern soul kicks in Keep On Shining.

FACE YOUR FEAR

★★★★

(Anti-, 2017)

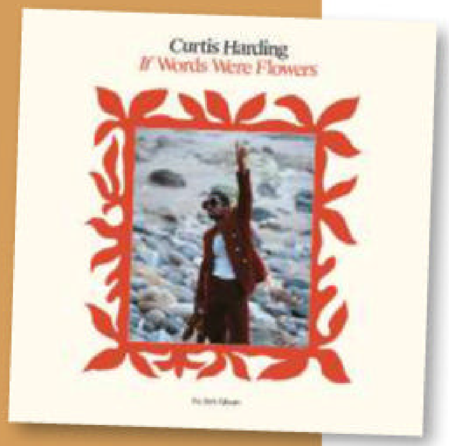


In its crawl and shadows, Wednesday Morning Atonement bears the mark of co-producer Danger Mouse. After that, it's Harding's soul show as he fires up the P-funk voodoo in Go As You Are and tears through Need Your Love like a garage rock Otis Redding.

IF WORDS WERE FLOWERS

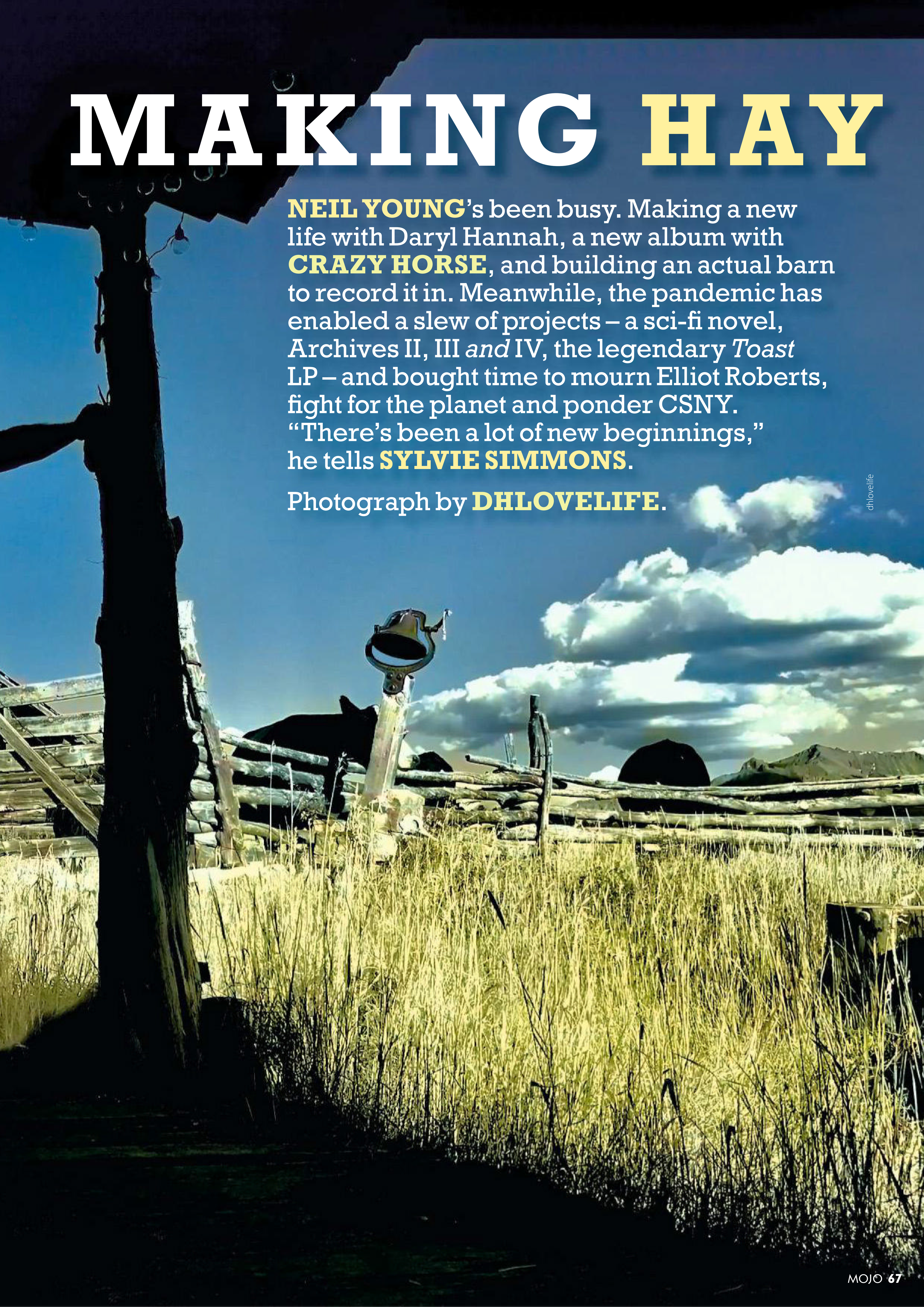
★★★★

(Anti-, 2021)



The title invocation's sumptuous turmoil and the hard-fought radiance in Hopeful announce Harding's transformation from disciple to innovator. Everything that follows affirms his flair for the eccentric and knack for hooks, sealed with vocal assurance.

Welcome back: Neil Young, at home and off the grid in 2021.



MAKING HAY

NEIL YOUNG's been busy. Making a new life with Daryl Hannah, a new album with **CRAZY HORSE**, and building an actual barn to record it in. Meanwhile, the pandemic has enabled a slew of projects – a sci-fi novel, Archives II, III *and* IV, the legendary *Toast* LP – and bought time to mourn Elliot Roberts, fight for the planet and ponder CSNY. "There's been a lot of new beginnings," he tells **SYLVIE SIMMONS**.

Photograph by **DHLOVELIFE**.

dhlovelife

NEIL YOUNG IS AT THE OTHER end of a Zoom call. Neil can see MOJO, MOJO can't see him, which is just the way he likes it. At MOJO's request he hits the camera button and for a moment or two there he is, smiling and waving from a dark, unlit room that might well be a kitchen, before disappearing. If this is the rustic house in Colorado Young shares with his actress wife, Daryl Hannah, or their latest home, a wooden house by the lake near Omemee, Canada, where he spent his childhood, he's not saying.

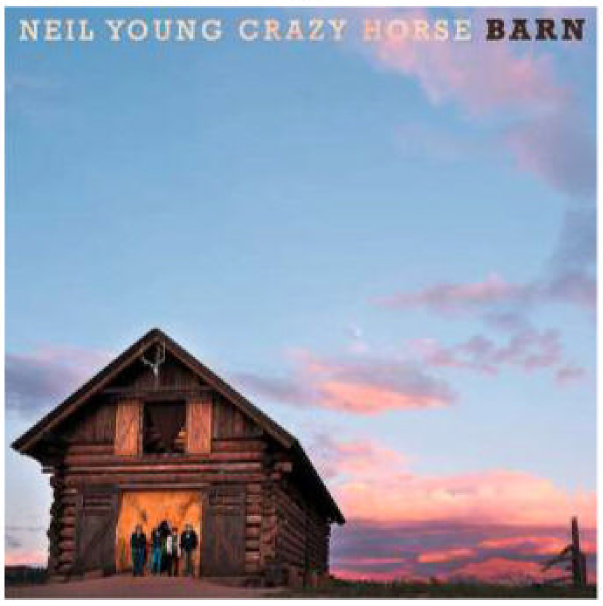
It's early in the morning, the sun's not up yet, nor is anyone in the house besides Neil, though soon we're joined by what sounds like a team of workmen, hammering away. Neil Young likes building things. Always has. There were those hybrid cars of his – classic American clunkers half the length of a street, that he'd convert into eco-friendly bio-fuel, then electric, cars. And there were all those adventures in finding the best new audio systems for playing old music. And there's barns. Neil has always loved barns.

His latest barn is pictured on the front sleeve of his new album, *Barn*. A wooden structure the size of a large church, set in a vast, empty, Rocky Mountain landscape at sunset. It dwarfs the four men posing outside the front door: Young, Billy Talbot, Ralph Molina and Nils Lofgren. Yep, Crazy Horse – the version of the band that played on Young's last album, *Colorado* (2019), ie. minus longtime rhythm guitarist Poncho Sampedro, plus longtime multi-instrumentalist Lofgren – is back again. Highly unusual. Since 1969 and his first album with them, *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*, it has been rare to have two Crazy Horse LPs in a row. Why the change?

"Well there's really no reason", says Young, other than that "the circumstance in the world was just so different." The pandemic, he means. The lockdown and then the move from Colorado to Canada.

"I didn't make any records for a year and a half," he adds. "During a long period of time we didn't do anything, except for those fireside sessions that Daryl and I did [films of Young playing guitar and piano in and around the house] and put on the internet."

Young wrote most of *Barn*'s songs in Canada. And when he felt ready to record them, the songs suggested to him that he should record them live in a barn. "That idea of recording live in a barn," he says, "is just a pure Crazy Horse idea."


NEIL YOUNG CRAZY HORSE BARN

Henry Diltz (2), dhlovelife

This isn't your first barn. Why do you like barns so much?

What's so beautiful about this barn is that it's made out of logs, so all the surfaces are curved. Which means the sound is much more mellow and not so overbearing, with different frequencies slapping back against each other. The roundness gives everything a chance to reflect.

Some of these songs are reflective in another sense. They're acoustic, nuanced, where we've come to associate Horse albums as monolithic sound and epic burnouts.

What happened with *Barn* is we had a lot of different kinds of songs. I started to write them about a year ago and I finished them right as we were doing the record, and some are like *After The Goldrush* songs. Acoustic songs as well as electric songs. But there's really nothing that that band can't do. So we were just exploring, you know? Moving through life, playing our music. We're lucky to be still doing this after 50 years.

Relationships half a century long don't come along very often.

No they don't and we're very fortunate. Even though Poncho is not with us, he was with us for 45, 46 years. He basically retired. He's got a really nice place over in Hawaii and he spends a lot of time in the water. He's very happy and healthy. But the rest of us just wanted to keep on going. And then we got Nils back and it's just great. We're very happy.

Does Nils make for a new chemistry?

Nils is a great musician and he's always been a member of the band from the very beginning, and even though he wasn't right with us all the time he's always been part of the band. So it's just like having him home again and it feels great. He's very, very versatile, and he plays a lot of other instruments, so it's a different sound. His accordion playing was amazing – I've always loved his accordion – and his singing is great, so is his spirit, and the way he whistles. All of our jams are really good; Nils is really listening. He has a different sensibility. It's all about the people and their playing and how they feel. We feel the atmosphere where we are and the songs reflect that.

This barn is in Colorado and off the grid?

Yes. We used generators.

Continues on page 72

> "WHEN WE LISTEN TO *BARN*, IT LIGHTENS US. THE MUSIC'S GOT A VIBE THAT'S REALLY CLEAN AND GOOD."

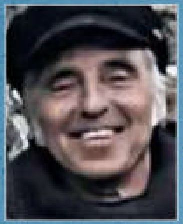
Keeps him searching: Young waits for the muse; (opposite page, from left) ready to roll, Malibu, 1975; with sleeve artist Gary Burden at Broken Arrow Ranch, California, May 27, 1971.

"YOU'RE RECORDING A COMBINED SOUL"

CRAZY HORSE, and producer **NIKO BOLAS**, on how they braved the elements, and their leader's whims, to build a *Barn*. As told to **TOM DOYLE**.

NILS LOFGREN

Guitar, piano, accordion, "beatnik moods".



"We were right in the height of the pandemic, and Neil said, 'It just feels wrong to not play or see each other for, y'know, a year and a half. I have maybe three or four songs I'm writing. Maybe we should get together for a few days, just be a band, play together, maybe record four songs.'

But Neil kept writing and getting inspired. All of a sudden, we had nine songs and Neil said, 'Man, I'm gonna finish this song tonight and tomorrow and we're gonna record a tenth song and we're gonna have an album.' And we did, and that was Human Race.

We were high up in the Rockies, a non-insulated, big draughty barn in the middle of nowhere. These giant old logs, with the wind whistling through. We had hailstorms, heavy rains, wind, beautiful sunny days. We played on a stage set up like a nightclub. We had our wooden Indian from the *Tonight's The Night* tour and the old *…Gold Rush* upright that I played Southern Man on when I was 18. A very haunting experience to sit at that at 70 and play it. Beautiful.

Again, we started recording as we were learning the songs. Neil will walk in: 'Maybe we'll try this.' All of a sudden, he's on a roaring electric guitar and I'm playing the upright, and we got a great rock tune. A case in point being Heading West. Neil likes people to hear what it's like when musicians are down in it and not really sure what the hell's coming next.

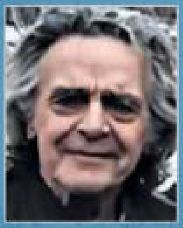
Neil likes it to be very rough. And not really for you to have learned the song too well. Just respond to what you're feeling. Really, the most important thing was the theme of being together on top of each other, no headphones, just playing live in a barn. The only audience was a dozen road crew guys.

One of my favourites is the spooky-as-hell Welcome Back. We did a couple of outtakes that were much more aggressive. And for no reason, when Neil said, 'Let's try it again,' it was still the heavy guitar, but it had a really kind of jazzy, laid-back, weird beatnik mood. And he never pulled out of it. He knows it's part of the charm of it all… catching himself off guard.

Isn't it great we're here? Just the history of the band, that familiarity. It wasn't lost on any of us that, after over 50 years, here we are creating something new. You're creating something new, and you really don't know what to play (*laughs*). It just brings a freshness to the heart and soul of any band."

BILLY TALBOT

Bass, first takes, fielding "rude remarks".



"I think we always want to keep it rolling. We didn't hear any songs before we got to the studio, except for Song Of The Seasons. We had gotten that one ahead of time. But everything else was right there in the barn and that week-to-10-days that we were there.

All those songs that are on *Barn* are being played for the first time together as a band. If it's not the first time, it might be the second time, literally. And then that's the record. Years ago, we would be playing something for the first time and then we'd play it again, then we'd play it again and then we'd go to record it. And we'd always wind up saying, 'Wow, too bad it's not like the first time we played it.' So, we like to capture things the first time.

Welcome Back is a pretty good long one, and it's got all the elements of anything Crazy Horse has ever done. We tried it, like, twice. Somehow, magically, we came to this place where we were playing it with the right groove and the right feel. You've got to pay attention, remain open.

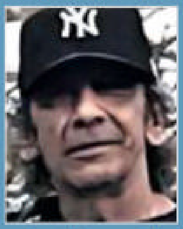
Nils used to be with us, y'know, 50 years ago, of course, and Nils has got great energy. He is a dynamic guy, and he plays beautifully, from his heart. Sure, we miss Poncho, but things come, and then they go. And you can't hold onto them. You gotta let it go.

Joni Mitchell and David Crosby saying rude things about Crazy Horse in the past? I mean, we deserved it. We deserve some rude remarks. That's good, because we're not sophisticated about what we do. We don't look at it that way. If you walk into a room and start playing something that we don't get right off, we're gonna fumble around and try to do good, but at the same time, we might mess up. You have to have patience with the Horse.

Is Crazy Horse more versatile than we're given credit for? I hope so. I think so. By the time we're all dead, we'll know (*laughs*)."

RALPH MOLINA

Drums, vibe control, arguing with Neil.



"We hardly ever play in studios. I don't think any of us like studios. We got a good sound there at the barn. The only thing was, up there, in the mountains, it got chilly at night. And I was sitting where above me there was this giant [open] window that had some kind of blanket or something hanging over it. And the wind would just *ssssssh* swirl down on me. It's hard playing when it's cold. I would sit in front of a heater, which was my spot.

I don't like to be stared at while I'm playing (*laughs*). And we had, like, 10 crew guys just sitting there and staring. And I told Neil about that. And he goes, 'Yeah, I know, I don't like it either. The next time, I'll make sure there's no one sitting there, just staring.' Because it's personal, the music. And I think about it when I'm playing. You get the feel and the passion in one or two takes. After that, you're just playing a part. We get a chance to improvise, which we like to do.

Recording in the days ahead of a full moon? I mean, personally, no, I don't buy into that. Me, I'm a crescent moon guy (*laughs*). But if people go, 'Well, the full moon, that's when we want to play,' I say, 'Fine.' But I'm not going by any full moon. I just hope the songs are great and we play great.

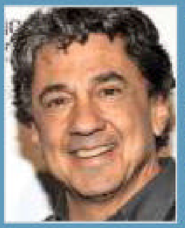
I don't look at it in any other way than we're playing songs. I don't go by what we did in the past, or whatever. We got Nils Lofgren now, who's always been a part of Crazy Horse anyway. I told Neil, 'Believe it or not, I miss Poncho, because Poncho brought that roar.' Nils hums… he's more tasty, like *After The Gold Rush*.

I don't think working with Neil has changed in any particular way. I think the writing has changed in the last two albums. There aren't many anthems. And I did talk to Neil, about maybe a month ago, and I finally got the nerve, after 50 fucking years of playing with him. I said, 'Y'know, if Elliot Roberts and David Briggs were alive, they would probably say what I'm gonna say to you right now. When you play with Crazy Horse, you got to write the anthems, the longer songs.' Where Neil gets to shine. He took that to heart and that's what he's into right now. Welcome Back is about nine minutes, and he really gets to shine, and I love it.

He and I, we get along great. We have a good respect for each other. Y'know, we argue at least one time, every tour. He gets in my face, I get in his face, and he respects that. He said, 'I wish more people would be like Ralph.' He doesn't want to be treated like a fucking legend or anything. None of us do."

NIKO BOLAS

Production, on and off, since *Landing On Water*.



"I got the call about a week before I left. And I just said yes. And then I said, 'What do you want to do? Holy shit. Are you kidding me?' I don't think Neil ever has an idea what he's doing. He just knows what it's going to be when it's done. He has a picture. Y'know, it's kind of like he can see the goalposts. But he's never looked at the grass or the field or where he is. He just *goes*.

The good thing about doing it in that remote place, in the barn, is you're in a natural bubble. We brought everything, including porta-potties. It was cold. There was no fucking air. It was wonderful. But yeah, there was challenges. Sometimes you need challenges to keep you preoccupied so that the music can have its own life. The brilliant stuff happens when I'm panicking over a cable that might go bad.

Here's the rule: when you see them arrive, you hit record. And then you go plug in the microphones, and you do it in that order. Because if they walk in, they'll just start playing. When that happens, *it* happens. You just record constantly. You're only ever getting one or two takes of every song. The minute they know how to play it, you're fucked. When they know it's happening, they get self-conscious, and it stops happening.

Are they more versatile than they get credit for? Yeah, they are. And they're extremely emotional, which no one sees. Everybody looks at them and thinks Cinnamon Girl or Down By The River or Like A Hurricane. Y'know, 20-minute, bombastic, 120-decibel assaults. No one gives them credit for the times they're teared-up and crying and dumping their guts behind the lyric.

Like the last song on *Barn*, Don't Forget Love. I mean, it rips my heart out. And I mixed it. I've heard it 1000 times. When they did it, they were all thinking about the lyric. They were all singing 'don't forget love' and what it meant to them. There wasn't a dry eye in the [recording] truck.

That's what you get that's different. They don't do parts. They do emotions. With Crazy Horse, you're not recording individual instruments, you're recording a combined soul."

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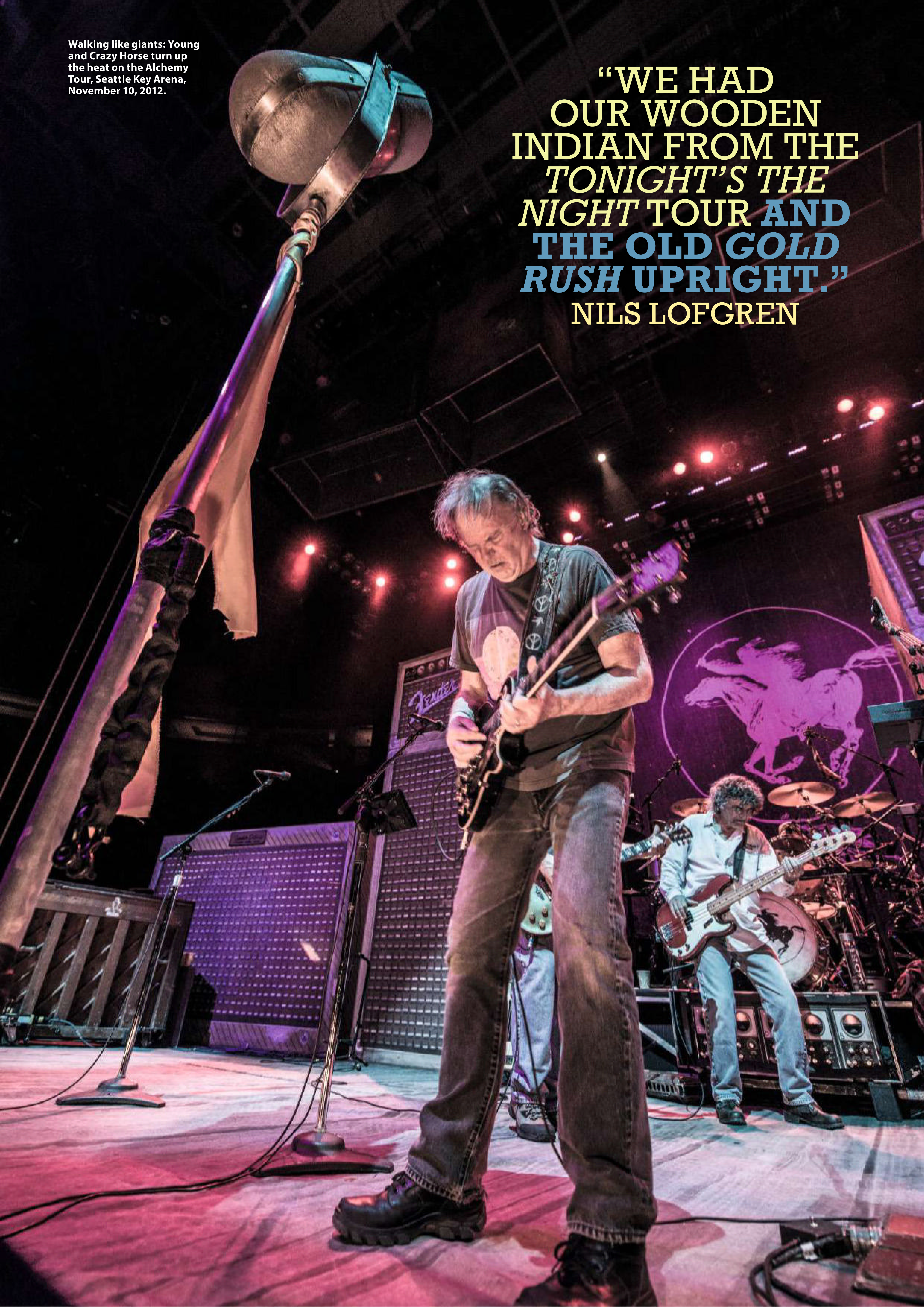

Walking like giants: Young and Crazy Horse turn up the heat on the Alchemy Tour, Seattle Key Arena, November 10, 2012.

> “WE HAD OUR WOODEN INDIAN FROM THE *TONIGHT’S THE NIGHT* TOUR **AND THE OLD *GOLD RUSH* UPRIGHT.”**
>
> NILS LOFGREN

> “THERE’S A FEELING THAT COMES WHEN THE MOON IS COMING UP. IT’S GOOD FOR MUSIC, FOR JAMMING, FOR IMPROVISING.”

Barn animals: Young and Crazy Horse take the mountain air, High In The Rockies, Colorado, June 2021 (from left) Billy Talbot, Ralph Molina, Nils Lofgren, Neil Young.

And moonlight? I’m told you recorded it during the full moon. Do you believe the full moon makes things intense and crazy?

It was not when the moon was full. That’s too intense. That’s when any kind of extreme thing can happen, extremely good or extremely bad. It’s five days or so before it gets to be full. There’s a feeling that comes when the moon is coming up that the creative part of music enjoys. It’s a good thing for music, for jamming, for improvising, and for anything that is instant it sounds really good. That’s my way of looking at it, that it’s good for me. Could be somebody else might not even notice, but for me that’s what I like.

The natural world has always played a big role in your life and music. In the first song on *Barn* [Song Of The Seasons], you mention Canada geese. And there’s geese on the first song on *Colorado* [Think Of Me]…

For me the Canada goose has always been a big part of my life, and being Canadian and seeing them in the sky all the time, and when I see them they always make me feel good. I always feel particularly grounded when I see them, no matter where they are. They could be in a park in New York or they could be anywhere they could be. They keep showing up in different places. They’re beautiful birds. I just love them.

You had several barns at your old home in northern California, Broken Arrow. There’s a story Graham Nash tells of visiting you there when you were recording *Harvest*. You had two big speakers set up to play it back – one in the house and one in the barn – and you took Nash out on a boat on your lake, stopping in the sweet spot between the house and the barn and adjusting the sound by yelling, “More barn!”

(*Laughs*) I was on a boat on the lake and Graham I think was on shore – I’m not sure, it was a long time ago – but the idea of “more barn”, people just thought that was really funny. So now when they hear this record they’ll want to say “More barn” and have a good time with it.

You left Broken Arrow several years ago. Elliot Roberts, your late manager, once said, “Neil will stay in one place forever, given the opportunity.” Was it hard for you to leave?

Not really. It’s part of life, you know? Life is full of things like that. If you want to move forward, sometimes you have to go places you didn’t anticipate. You can build things and think you’re going to be there forever and you have to leave them behind. That’s just part of growing and part of adapting to life as it presents itself. Sometimes you can’t tell what’s next, so you have to just roll with it and be the best you can, and that’s what I did. And I’m very fortunate that I’m sharing my life right now with Daryl. And we had a dream of building *this* barn, and we built it – well, we re-built it. It was built in the 1800s and it had fallen into the ground. It had a broken back and it was just crumbling into the earth. But we grabbed a lot of the pieces and we put them together. So the front of the barn is made out of all the original wood from the old barn and then we got new wood to build the side and the back and the beams and things. It’s as close as we

The artist and the enforcer: Young with his longtime friend and manager Elliot Roberts at Broken Arrow Ranch, May 29, 1971.

Henry Diltz

could get to a restoration of the original barn, and then we put our music in it.

New place, new partner. What changed for you when you left California for Colorado?

Everything changes. And a lot of things changed for me. I was – uh, you know, it was just a time of my life where I wasn't physically that great, I wasn't that bright mentally, and I realised I had some issues with breathing at night while I was sleeping. So I got that all worked out and I got some devices to help me with that and that made me feel a lot better, and that happened about the same time.

But really when I left Broken Arrow – which of course I still visit, as Ben [Neil and his late ex-wife Pegi's disabled son] lives there with his team of people that help take care of him. In fact I'll be seeing him when I go back to the West Coast, which is where I'm going to go first [on this tour]. And then we'll go for a ride in the bus and then we'll go south, because Daryl and I have a house down there. It's a great house. Of course the first house we had down there, Daryl's, which we were living in, was burned in the fire [the wildfires that consumed huge parts of Malibu in 2018] so we lost that. But this new house feels great. So there's been a lot of new beginnings. And if you just go with it, it's cool.

When you left Broken Arrow, I had visions of people knocking it down and building McMansions all over your land, so I'm glad it's still in one piece.

I am too, it's in great shape. Everything's good.

This is the first album you've made since Elliot Roberts died…

Yes it is. And he would have loved this. It's so sad that he didn't get to hear it and celebrate it with us, because we think it's one of the best things we've ever done and we feel excellent about it. When we listen to it, it lightens us, it makes us feel good about ourselves and our life. The music's got a vibe that's really clean and good as it bounces off those round logs. It's fantastic, and Elliot would have loved that.

You and Elliot seemed joined at the hip. He was there from the beginning of your solo career and you did so much together. He was your friend and your enforcer – I was enforced by Elliot on many occasions!

(*Laughs*) Yeah! I miss him. I miss his humour. I mean we talked eight or 10 times a day on the telephone when we weren't together. Every day we talked. So of course that leaves a giant space. But my new life is really cool, I've got a lot of love in it and everything, so things are going well. And we all miss Elliot. Everybody does. But he's still here with us. There's a picture of him on the side of one of the amps that you can see in the movie – Daryl made this great movie, it's very cool. So Elliot's on-stage with us. Where he always was.

"GOOD MORNING, SWEETheart." Daryl Hannah has just come into the room. "People are waking up everywhere now that the hammers are here," Young chuckles. What's he building in there, MOJO asks? "They're knocking on the house," Neil laughs. "But they can't come in."

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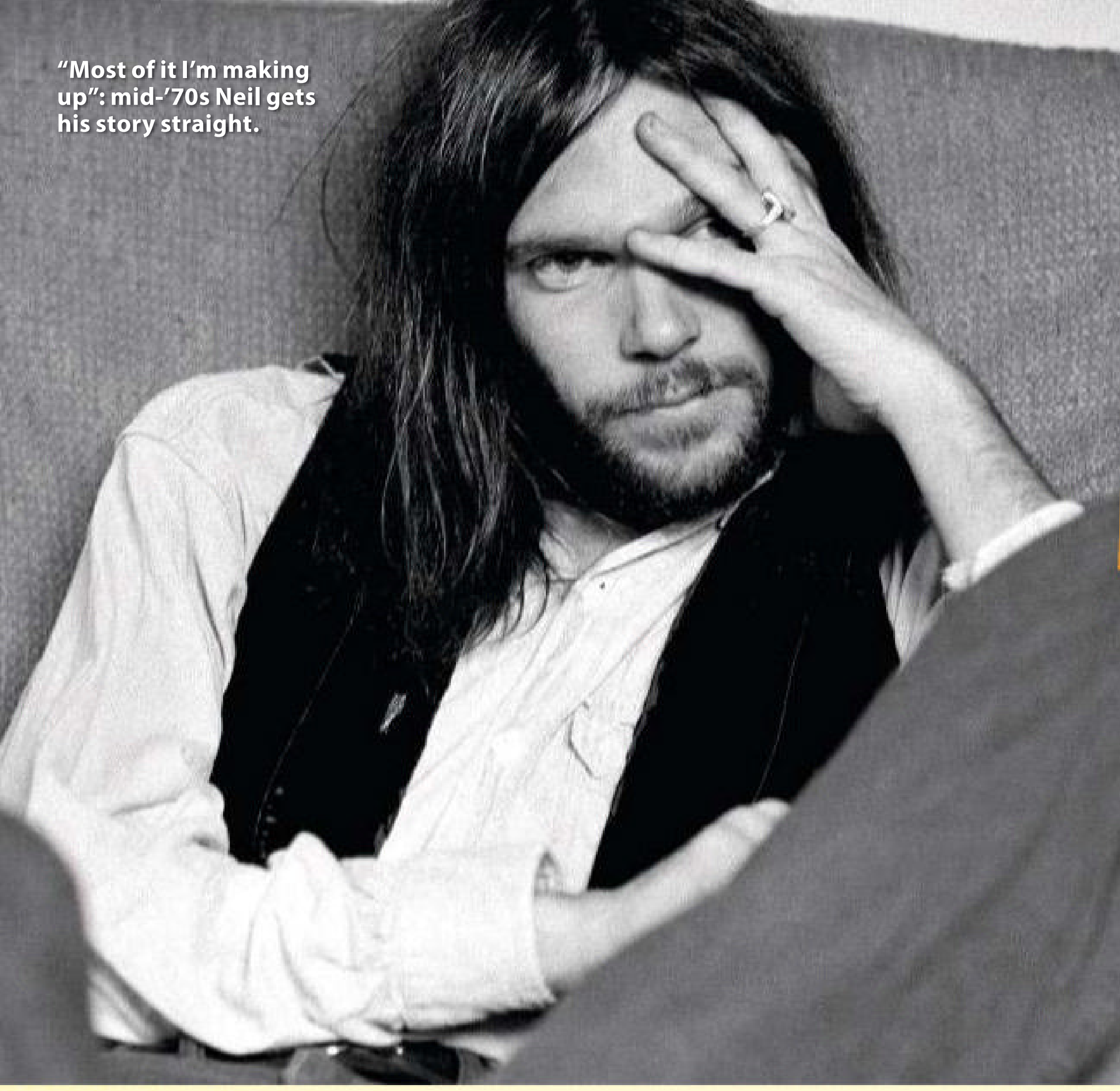


“Most of it I’m making up”: mid-’70s Neil gets his story straight.

SUGAR MOUNTAIN BREAKDOWN

Who needs seven Old Mans? And six Sugar Mountains? You do! All Neil Young’s Archive series releases, in order of their original recording dates, evaluated by **JOHN MULVEY**.

1. Archives Performance Series Volume 00: Sugar Mountain – Live At Canterbury House 1968 (2008)

“I never ever have told a lie on-stage,” claims Neil Young, almost 23 in November ’68, as he pads out a solo set in Ann Arbor with endearingly tallish tales. The nervous, goofy persona is a shock, but the chat does mean the flow of Buffalo Springfield relics and unreleased solo songs is somewhat fragmented. This version of Sugar Mountain first surfaced in 1969 as B-side of The Loner; Young’s contorted attempt at Mason Williams’ Classical Gas remains less fêted in the canon.

2. Archives Performance Series Volume 01: Live At The Riverboat 1969 (2009)

Gary Burden

Choosing one of the Canterbury House and Riverboat shows for inclusion on the first Archives box set, Young opted for the latter, recorded three months later in Toronto. He’s still highly talkative, more stoned than shy this time out, though a *distrait* mood doesn’t undermine the precision and tenderness of Flying On The Ground Is Wrong and Expecting To Fly. Plus, a real rarity: Whiskey Boot Hill, with the lyrics that would belatedly turn up as part of Country Girl on CSNY’s *Déjà Vu*.

3. Archives Performance Series Volume 02: Live At The Fillmore East 1970 (2006)

FILLMORE EAST
NEIL YOUNG AND CRAZY HORSE
MILES DAVIS
MOODY BLUES
COCKER
BRIAN AUGER

Enter Crazy Horse. Young began his March 1970 New York shows with solo sets, though it’s the phenomenal electric second half captured here. Poignancy comes from it being Danny Whitten’s last Crazy Horse tour (you’ll know this Whitten-led Come On Baby Let’s Go Downtown from *Tonight’s The Night*), but exuberance, power and the Horse’s underappreciated agility dominate one of the very best Neil live albums. Has he ever played a better Down By The River?

4. Archives Performance Series Volume 02.5: Live At The Cellar Door (1970) (2013)

Young has obsessively revisited his shows from November 30, 1970 to January 22, 1971: no less than four acoustic albums from the period have been released thus far. Drawn from three Washington Cellar Door shows between November 30 and December 3, the growth in Young’s focus and confidence is striking – as are his new songs (See The Sky About To Rain, four years away from official release). Key rarity: the only known solo piano version of Cinnamon Girl.

5. Official Bootleg Series 01: Carnegie Hall, December 4th, 1970 (2021)

NEIL YOUNG 1970
CARNEGIE HALL

Two days later, Young is in New York playing Cinnamon Girl on acoustic again, at the first of two Carnegie Hall shows (the second is an unofficial bootleg staple). Running parallel to the Archives series, he launched the Official Bootleg Series in 2021 with this long 1970 set. The grand concert venue means that The Cellar Door’s intimacy is missed, but you do get an extra 10 songs, including a rapturously received Southern Man, and some choice Buffalo Springfield excavations: it’s Nowadays Clancy Can’t Even Sing that gets the surprise piano treatment.

6. Archives Performance Series Volume 03: Live At Massey Hall 1971 (2007)

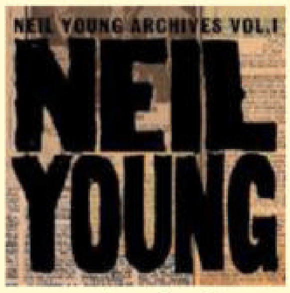
January 19, 1971, and back home in Toronto the setlist has tilted away from the previous September’s release, *After The Goldrush*, and towards February’s imminent *Harvest*. Over half of the songs were unreleased at the time, including a heartfelt Needle And The Damage Done and Dance Dance Dance, subsequently handed to Crazy Horse for their self-titled album before Young reclaimed it as Love Is A Rose. A gig so good, producer David Briggs lobbied to release it in preference to *Harvest*.

7. Archives Performance Series Volume 03.5: Young Shakespeare (1971) (2021)

YOUNG SHAKESPEARE

The title alludes to the venue – the Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, Connecticut – where Young fetched up three nights after Massey Hall. The two setlists are broadly similar (*Young Shakespeare* adds yet another Sugar Mountain for your collection), with the A Man Needs A Maid/Heart Of Gold segue a stark highlight; “more calm” than Massey Hall, is Young’s verdict. The significant point of difference is 16mm footage of the show, some of the earliest live film of Young, shot for German TV.

8. Archives Volume I: 1963-1972 (2009)



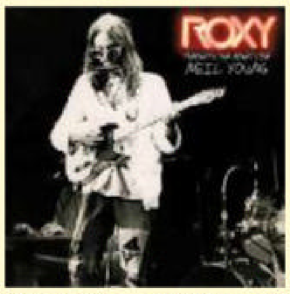
The first Archives box set was not quite the rarities bonanza anticipated – only 47 out of 137 tracks were previously unreleased – and its optimal format (10 Blu-ray discs) has not aged well. Still, as a comprehensive document of Young’s evolution from surf-rock *naif* in The Squires, via Buffalo Springfield, Crazy Horse, CSNY and numerous solo incarnations, it’s still pretty essential. Crazy Horse mooching through schmaltzy oldie It Might Have Been, and a rowdy CSNY pulling themselves together for Tell Me Why – gorgeous – are valuable curios.

9. Archives Performance Series Volume 04: Tuscaloosa (1973) (2019)

NEIL YOUNG + STRAY GATORS
TUSCALOOSA

Young's early '73 American tour, with rootsy compadres The Stray Gators as backing band, is memorialised on *Time Fades Away*. But here's part of an Alabama date from earlier in the jaunt, before Johnny Barbata replaced Kenny Buttrey on drums. The Gators are rambunctiously inspired (Time Fades Away itself is astonishing), the setlist pivots toward hits rather than new songs, and note Young's developing attitude to the truth compared with 1968: "Don't clap for this story because most of it I'm making up," he admits, introducing Heart Of Gold.

10. Archives Performance Series Volume 05: Roxy: Tonight's The Night Live 1973 (2018)



A few weeks after the tequila-soaked sessions for *Tonight's The Night* were completed, Young shepherded Crazy Horse – temporarily reconfigured as The Santa Monica Flyers, with the addition of Ben Keith – down the Sunset Strip to the new Roxy Club. Compared with the frayed and destabilised studio takes, the live versions are slightly tighter, while still wired with loss, chemicals and a blackly comic, nihilistic vision of rock'n'roll. Key lie: Young's insistence that the gig is taking place in Miami Beach, not LA.

11. Special Release Series Volume 02: Homegrown (1975) (2020)

NEIL YOUNG
HOMEGROWN

If live albums in the Archive Performance Series have dominated Neil Young Archives editions, the Special Release Series is what many fans dreamed of when the project began: full unreleased albums, like this legendary artefact from 1975. *Homegrown*, amazingly, outdoes its myth: a quite different beast from the bootlegs, with seven songs appearing for the first time in studio incarnations, and some of them – notably the stomping Vacancy, the missing link between *On The Beach* and *Zuma* – previously unknown to even the most assiduous Neil scholars. Worth the 45-year wait.

12. Archives Volume II: 1972–1976 (2020)

NEIL YOUNG ARCHIVES VOL. II
NEIL YOUNG

Originally promised for a couple of years after *Archives Volume I*, and planned to cover 1972-1982, *Archives II* eventually manifested in 2020, its 10 discs covering roughly half that timespan. Intense focus on '72-76 proves rewarding: *Homegrown* figures alongside two more legendary unreleased albums (1975's *Dume* and the '76 live set *Odeon Budokan*). Among all the spectacular and radical alternate versions, 12 previously unheard songs – mostly great – are revealed. And the long-rumoured match-up of Joni Mitchell and the Santa Monica Flyers on Raised On Robbery is just as wild as we'd hoped.

13. Special Release Series Volume 05: Hitchhiker (1976) (2017)

NEIL YOUNG HITCHHIKER

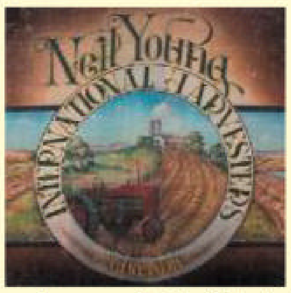
True to ornery Young form, the first unreleased studio album to emerge in the Special Release Series was one previously unmentioned: an entirely solo session planned by Young as the follow-up to *Zuma*, rejected by his label as resembling demos. It's certainly raw, but in a way which enhances rather than undermines these fine songs – among them one authentic lost classic, Give Me Strength. Note that *Hitchhiker* is Volume 05 and *Homegrown* Volume 02. Volume 10 is the soundtrack to Young's 2018 film, *Paradox*; the names and provenance of the other albums in the series remain, predictably, unclear.

14. Archives Performance Series Volume 07: Songs For Judy (1976) (2018)

Neil Young
Songs For Judy

Young's November 1976 US tour featured two sets a night: one with Crazy Horse, and a warm-up solo turn. *Songs For Judy* compiles choice performances from those opening sets (essentially an upgraded version of the Bernstein Tapes bootleg), ranging from Springfield cuts (a punchy Mr Soul) to songs that would stay on the shelf until 1990 (White Line) and a fragile, beautiful outlier, No One Seems To Know, that only exists elsewhere as a *Zuma* outtake on the second *Archives* box set.

15. Archives Performance Series Volume 09: A Treasure (1984–1985) (2011)



Young's capricious 1980s should prove massive value when the Archives grapples with that decade in earnest, as Volumes 09 and 11 indicate. *A Treasure* finds him kicking up the dust at rodeos and state fairs in the company of a troupe of Nashville vets he called The International Harvesters. Virtuoso hoedowns dominate, including some strong songs from the lost first version of *Old Ways* (Grey Riders is a gem) and a dreamy Flying On The Ground Is Wrong that foreshadows *Harvest Moon*.

16. Archives Performance Series Volume 11: Bluenote Café (1987-1988) (2015)

NEIL YOUNG
BLUENOTE CAFÉ

The second '80s instalment showcases The Bluenotes, who backed Young on 1988's *This Note's For You*, a horn-laden R&B big band whose swing works better live than on that studio album. There's a fair amount of arch showbiz shtick over the three discs, but the highlights are significant: the anthemic 12-minute trudge of Ordinary People, subsequently abandoned 'til 2007; and a ferocious Crime In The City, soon to be a cornerstone of 1989's *Freedom*.

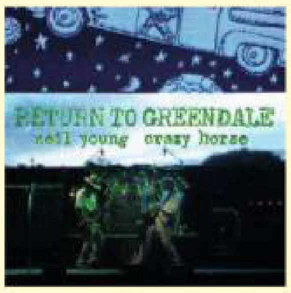
17. Archives Performance Series Volume 11.5: Way Down In The Rust Bucket (1990) (2021)

If *Weld* (1991) has long been one of the best Neil Young live albums, this effective prequel is just as good, with Crazy Horse warming up for the Ragged Glory Tour near Young's ranch in Santa Cruz. Classic Horse burners Like A Hurricane, Cortez The Killer and an exceptional, newly-minted Love And Only Love, endless solo upon endless solo, close an epic 19-song set, which also has room for some chunky *Re·ac·tor* nuggets – Surfer Joe And Moe The Sleaze and T-Bone – and a rare outing for 1977's Bite The Bullet. Quite a night.

18. Archives Performance Series Volume 12: Dreamin' Man Live '92 (2009)

A relatively slight entry in the series, *Dreamin' Man* simply consists of the 10 songs of 1992's *Harvest Moon*, recorded at a selection of US shows, mostly before the studio album had been released. The twist comes in that it's another solo album, Young's emotional verities exposed where they were cushioned on *Harvest Moon* by star backing vocals and The Stray Gators. Such A Woman notably benefits from the lack of saccharine strings; dog homily Old King, with some fiendish banjo picking, is an unlikely highlight.

19. Archives Performance Series Volume 16: Return To Greendale (2003) (2020)



Young's restless 21st century has seen him plough through numerous new music projects at considerable speed and with scant second glances, while simultaneously curating the Archives. But he seems to have an ongoing engagement with the 2003 eco-opera, *Greendale*. This performance from Toronto captures the rickety community theatre vibes, but also the songs' blues-inflected subtleties: Billy Talbot and Ralph Molina with a stereotype-defying lightness of touch; languid guitar from Young at his most lyrical, especially on Carmichael and Grandpa's Interview.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Trying to keep up with Neil Young's whims and discoveries, and how they derail what passes as an Archives schedule, is a full-time job: the number of occasions he's promised *Toast* alone, the lost 2001 Crazy Horse album, is a saga in itself. Following Carnegie Hall 1970, five other albums have been announced for the Official Bootleg Series: two more from early 1971; another Santa Monica Flyers 1973 show; the 1974 gig oft-bootlegged as Citizen Kane Jr Blues; and a 1977 set with his short-lived Ducks band. Note: these were all slated for September 2021.

Other albums Young has teased include *Harvest Time*, a Stray Gators set from 1971; *Early Daze*, featuring Crazy Horse in 1969; and another Crazy Horse jaunt, *Alchemy*, from their 2012-13 tour. Then there's *Archives Volume III*, optimistically scheduled for 2022, and *potentially* featuring at least three legendary unreleased albums: *Oceanside-Countryside*, *Chrome Dreams* and the original *Old Ways*. "A real monster," Young called it in September. "The biggest one yet… We also have had a great time building a handful of unreleased album titles from those years – albums with some familiar tracks but mostly unheard music, as well as completely new ones!"

“WHEN I LEFT CALIFORNIA – IT WAS A TIME OF MY LIFE WHERE I WASN’T PHYSICALLY THAT GREAT, I WASN’T THAT BRIGHT MENTALLY.”

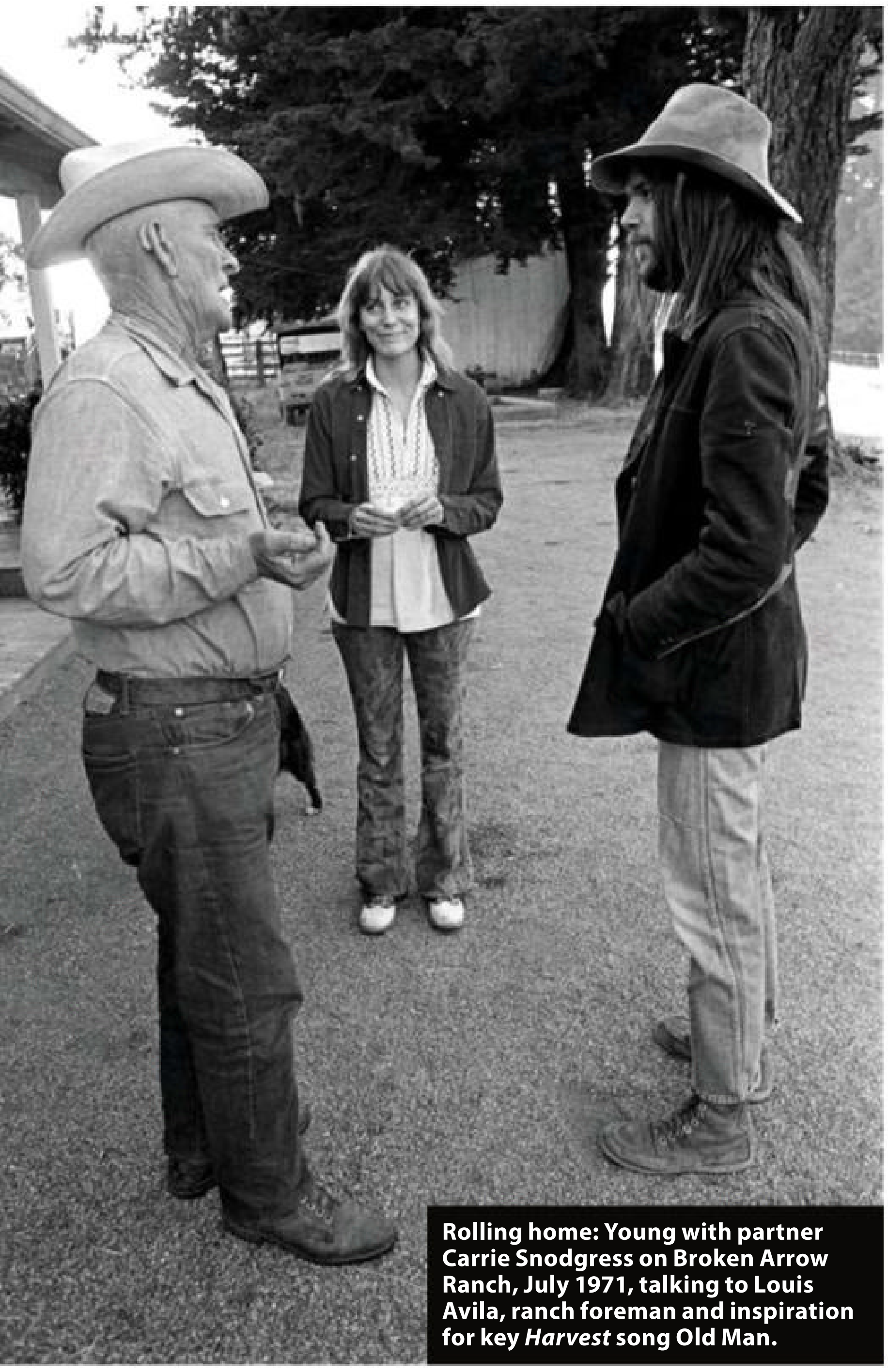
With Neil Young, there’s always work going on. Even during these past 18 months with no new album, he was releasing a succession of Archive series sets, and working on more. Finally emerging in November 2020 was the mammoth 10-CD box set *Archives Volume II, 1972-1976* – 131 songs from a three-and-a-half-year period in Young’s life, 63 of them previously unreleased. “And we’re well into the third volume,” he says. “We’re more than halfway through and it’s the biggest volume year by far.”

Archives Volume III, which he’s planning to release in the first half of 2022, covers a huge sweep of time, from 1976 to 1990. During five of these years, Young was signed to a new record label, Geffen, which frequently rejected the albums he gave them and notoriously sued him for making records which “were not commercial in nature and musically uncharacteristic of Young’s previous records.” Among them were two different versions of *Old Ways*. Neil re-assembled a third version, which will hopefully make an appearance. All he’ll say for now about *III* is, “I’m really happy with it. There’s really a lot of cool stuff in there. So I’m having a lot of fun with that, and the fourth one is sitting out there. I’m looking to start on that.”

Separately, there have been rumours of a pending release for *Toast*, the “murky and dark” Crazy Horse album that Young cut in 2001 but shelved in favour of *Are You Passionate?*, his album with Booker T & The M.G.’s. Earlier this year, Young blogged about *Toast* on his Archives page. “Unlike any other,” he wrote, “*Toast* was so sad that I couldn’t put it out,” going on to explain that “the music of *Toast* is about a relationship. There is a time in many relationships that go bad, a time long before the break up, where it dawns on one of the people, maybe both, that it’s over. This was that time.”

Throughout your music career you’ve been about doing something quickly and moving on, no looking back. Why is it so important for you to keep working on music from your past?

I don’t release these records like I expect anything to happen with them. I put them out there because I want them to be done while I’m here to do it. I want to make sure that the music is taken care of and that everything is done in the right way. I don’t want to have other folks finishing my job for me later on. So that’s what I’m trying doing. It’s not hard. It’s a cool thing and it’s so much fun. If only I had the time. It takes a lot of time and a lot of people who are working with me. And I never had the time to do it until the pandemic happened. Even though it’s sad what’s happened to so many people, for me it’s been a gift, an opportunity to take care of a lot of things. It gave me a lot of time to stay focused and finally able to organise the things that I’ve done and get the Archives in the position to where things are getting finished. They’re nice periods of time and music and all kinds of stuff. When you go back and look through it, in some cases put it back together, and the things that were unfinished you complete, it’s a very good feeling.



Rolling home: Young with partner Carrie Snodgress on Broken Arrow Ranch, July 1971, talking to Louis Avila, ranch foreman and inspiration for key *Harvest* song Old Man.

Henry Diltz, dhlovelife

This year’s *Young Shakespeare* live album [from 1971] was brilliant. When you go back through all these old concert tapes, do you think, “I really nailed that one!”? Or is it just another to tick off the list?

There’s a lot of happiness when I hear a good performance. I feel great about it, like, “Wow, some people are going to enjoy this” – the people who were there at the time, who thought that they’d heard everything but they didn’t. For them this is going to be a gift, because it’s the same quality as all the stuff that was out there, the hits, and everything. Why didn’t it come out back then? Because there was just was too much of it.

Because songs just kept pouring out of you?

It’s just the way it happens with me. I’m lucky that way. So I’m very happy about it. I had *so* much stuff. I just recorded everything and kept on going, and I never even stopped to finish it. But yeah, *Young Shakespeare* is a very, very beautiful record. And if it wasn’t for Elliot we never would have had that [Roberts arranged for a German TV crew to record the gig]. And he was thinking all the time. Elliot is a big part of the Archives. Much of it would not be there without him.

Another excellent recent Archive release is *Homegrown* – an album you completed, recorded and shelved for decades. At the time you said it was too dark and sad and personal to release – strange, given this was the time of the Doom Trilogy?

Well you know, dark and sad are two different things. But *Homegrown* – there *was* a sad period going on, breaking up [with then-partner Carrie Snodgress] and all of that and learning to deal with all of those things. So I made that record and I just kept moving. And the fact is that during that period in the ’70s, most artists only put out at the very most a couple of albums a year and that was a lot, but in ’75 or ’74, I put out three albums. And that album was part of that period but it never came out.

The way it works is there’s no plan. When the music calls, you just have to write the songs and go with it. And as soon as I feel I’m ready I go in the studio and record them and then after that I feel good. Whether I perform them or whether I finish them or not is not nearly as important as that I record it. So that leaves me with a lot of stuff that I have to go back in and finish.

Are there any other albums in the archive you’ve been conflicted about releasing? Or at this stage are you OK with putting everything out there? *Toast*, for example…

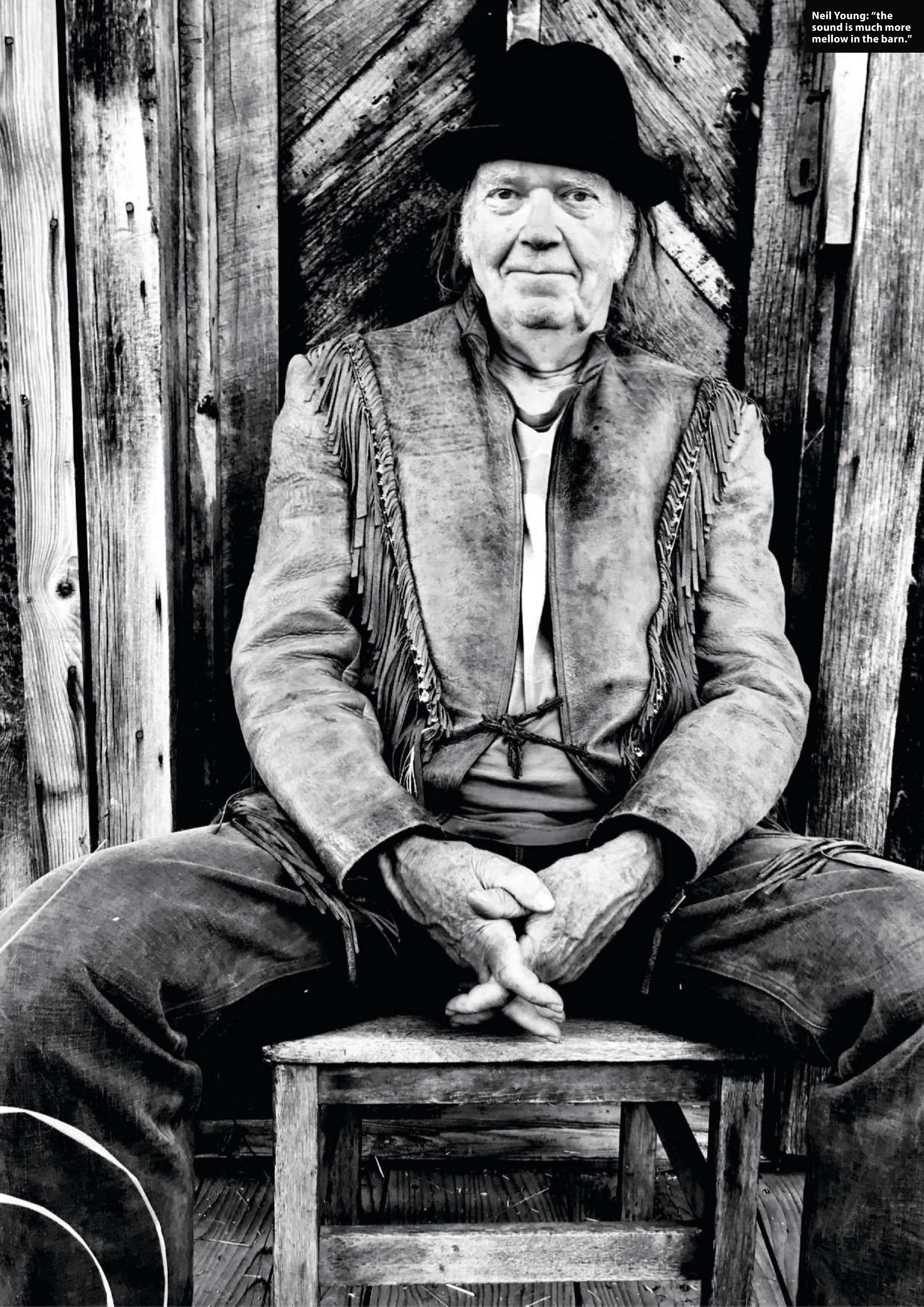
That’s a *great* record. It was recorded for Surroundsound – a big sound coming out of many speakers – and today they have this new thing called [Dolby] Atmos, which is a new kind of mixing that has a spatial quality to it and so we’ll see what happens with *Toast*. It is a very unique and great record. It may come out next year. It’s just that there are so many things, there’s really a lot of stuff and the new stuff always takes precedence over the old stuff. That’s the way I do it. So I’m just moving along here, I’ve got a song or two going for the next one, and we’ll see what happens. But *Toast* is finished and it’s ready to go.

You recently turned down a big offer to tour another old album, *Harvest*. Given you spend so much time working with new technology on old material, wouldn’t you find it interesting to revisit a 50-year-old album in a new musical environment?

No. I’d rather do a new album with new musicians and not try to play old parts by other musicians that aren’t here any more. You can’t recreate the past. If the past is preserved, you don’t have to recreate it. Those are just promoters’ things. As far as my world, it’s not what I’m interested in.

The digital world comes with built-in obsolescence. What’s your take on that?

We don’t know what the future holds, but the focus of the tech companies like Apple, they want to sell technology, they want things that are new and different. But they’re not so much concerned with the original quality of music, of capturing the original great quality of the masters in the history of recorded sound, which is what they could be doing. New technologies that are



Neil Young: "the sound is much more mellow in the barn."

"I DON'T RELEASE THESE ARCHIVES LIKE I EXPECT ANYTHING TO HAPPEN WITH THEM. I PUT THEM OUT THERE BECAUSE I WANT THEM TO BE DONE WHILE I'M HERE TO DO IT."

built on lower resolution will never be as good as the original analogue recordings of all the classics – all of the Frank Sinatra records and everything. All of them should be transferred to the greatest resolution in digital and be made available that way for people. I'm a little concerned about the future of my records because I think that the quality that's there may not be taken care of in the way I would have liked it. But there's something I can do about that, which is why I'm making sure my old records are all there in the way that I want them to be remembered.

There's a song on your new album called Human Race. Do you have hope for the future of the species? Are you worried your old nemesis Trump might make a comeback?

I have hope for the future, always. I'm not worried about Trump. Trump is basically meaningless now, because what matters now is the environment and taking care of the planet. I think that music and politics and *everything* is going to be around the climate and what's happening. You don't have to look very far to see it's getting worse and worse. If we don't immediately turn around and start going the other way, we're screwed. That's the truth, the scientific truth. We've never been in a place like this in the history of the world. This is a monumental problem, and very few people actually grasp it. But I think more and more will.

And that's why when you ask me about Trump, I feel like it's meaningless, it's not going to make any difference. People are going to have to react to the situation that we're in, whoever they are.

You've been writing a novel, Canary. Is it dystopian?

It's a science fiction novel about people and stuff that happens in the future. It's another place. It's not dystopian though. And it's finished. Now they're just waiting for me to do some illustrations, which I haven't found the right moment for yet. I can see them in my mind, but when it comes to trying to create them they don't look right. So I'm just waiting until that happens. Because it will. And if I can't do it someone else will do it and that will be OK, because the main thing is the story. But I do want to do these illustrations. As soon as my mind opens up some more, I'll be painting.

I talked with Crosby, Stills and Nash earlier this year about the archive version of *Déjà Vu*. Will you ever play with CSNY again?

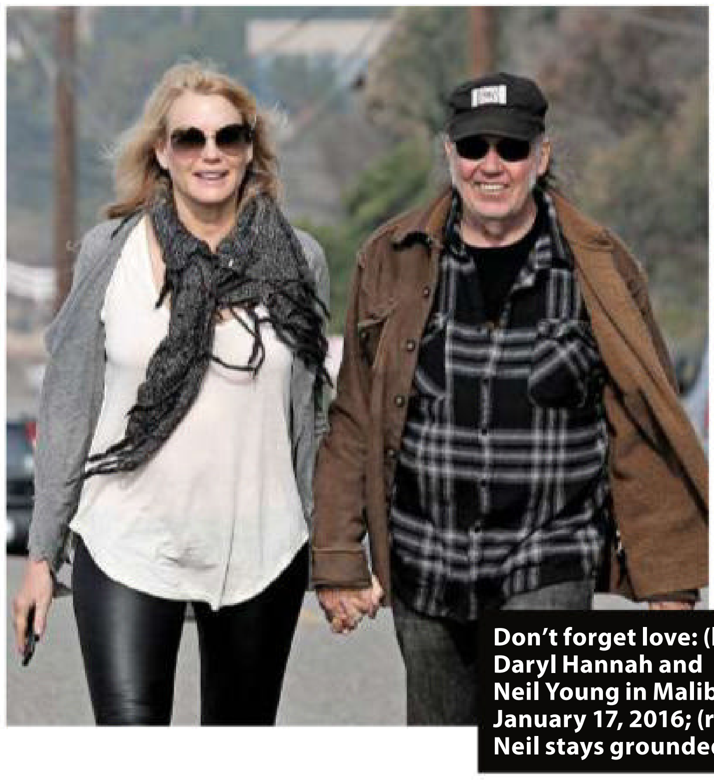
I can't answer the question. Because I don't know the answer to it. It's in the future. Things could evolve to that point. I don't see it in this moment but I'm not saying it will never happen. Why would I say it would never happen? That just doesn't make sense. But I'm focused right now on what's going on on the planet, what's going on in the world, and trying to listen to my musical sense of what my soul wants to do, and create and continue this part of me that is out of control and wants to do what it does. So I just have to take care of that and keep on going while at the same time be aware of the world and what is happening. And if Crosby, Stills and Nash fit into that, we'll see what happens. I wish them all the best. But musically, I'm not interested in reliving the past.

It used to be that new music or bands would catch your ear and inspire new directions. Has that happened lately?

There's so much music now, it's so available to everybody, but you're not hearing the top songs of the day on the radio any more. Now you have people's playlists from all time that they put together that you're hearing in the background. It's a different world. So I really am not hearing the new things that are happening and thinking, "I'd like to do something like this or that." I'm just waiting for the muse, and for the moment when I know what I'm going to do. It'll happen. I'm just waiting for it. I've just got to keep my eyes open.

Final question. In your song Shape Of You, on *Barn*, you sing: "I'm old now but I'm still dreaming." What are you dreaming of?

Well it depends what day it is. Today? (*Laughs*) Well today I'm dreaming about writing some more songs, hanging out with Daryl – and going and getting some granola.



Don't forget love: (left) Daryl Hannah and Neil Young in Malibu, January 17, 2016; (right) Neil stays grounded.

Getty, © Insight News & Features, Inc, © Jay Blakesberg

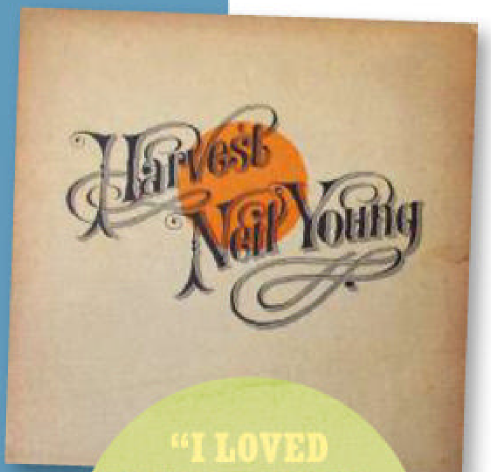
Gold standard: Linda Ronstadt in London, January 26, 1971.

SO SHALL YE REAP

Fifty years on, LINDA RONSTADT remembers her role in Neil Young's biggest hit album, *Harvest*.

"I FIRST MET Neil at the Troubadour. He struck me as shy, like gun-shy, and taciturn, kind of in another world, but when he spoke, he was very straightforward. As a songwriter, he was obviously first-rate, original and thought-provoking, and so admired by the best, like Randy Newman. And I loved Neil's singing: almost a boy soprano, this strange Northern voice, like the sound of a loon.

He was always friendly and nice to me, but I barely knew him, or James Taylor, when we were all invited to Nashville to record the Johnny Cash show. After the show, Neil said, 'I'm going to the studio, why don't you both come?' I think his producer, Elliot Mazer, had suggested to Neil that James and I should play on his record.



"I LOVED NEIL'S SINGING: THIS STRANGE NORTHERN VOICE, LIKE THE SOUND OF A LOON."

Nashville was such a foreign world to us. If you didn't wear make-up or a bra, or the guys had long hair, they couldn't figure you out, but the musicians were so good. The studio [Quadrafonic] was small but it was Nashville's hip studio at the time, with the latest equipment. We were all in one room, singing on every take, live. There was no overdubbing. It just took a few hours to get the tracks down.

The only instruction Neil gave me was for Heart Of Gold. He said, 'Just hop on the chord, and sing the top register.' But I'd been singing harmonies before I started singing melodies, so I knew intuitively what to do. I thought my voice was disappearing into the other voices, so maybe that's why I sang loud, but I always did. I'd be told, 'Back off the microphone!' We stayed up all night long, until dawn.

I love Heart Of Gold. From that opening chop-chop-chop guitar rhythm, you know it's going to be a great song. But Old Man was especially poignant for me. Where Neil was in his life, all of a sudden there is new fame, and you don't know what it means, friends treat you differently, you don't know where you're going, or how long it's going to last, or if you'll enjoy it anyway. So, he bought a ranch so he could think about it, and that's where he met the old man.

I think *Harvest* is one of the best albums in American pop, or classic rock, maybe even Top 5. It's Neil's uniqueness, and his beautiful writing, so well-crafted and yet casual-sounding, and how he resonated with the *Zeitgeist* in subtle ways. Was I surprised when he changed direction after *Harvest*? I was on the road with him for four months [1973's Time Fades Away tour] and to me, he didn't seem to be veering in any particular direction. He just made music the way he was feeling, just what was on his mind, doing the same stuff that Neil always did."

As told to Martin Aston

Def Jam
Waller Creek
ANAIS MITCHELL
The Band
Cahoots
GORILLAZ
BOY
HE BOY NAME

MOJO FILTER

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC

EDITED BY **JENNY BULLEY** jenny.bulley@bauermedia.co.uk

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> "This is a sound that is genre-curious in its sparkle and allure, and most certainly not for everyone."
>
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Talking Sheds

Leeds-based chroniclers of post-Brexit Britain refuse to give in to despair on exhilarating debut. By **Victoria Segal**. Illustration by **Haus Of Lucy**.

Yard Act

★★★★

The Overload

ZEN F.C./ISLAND. CD/DL/LP

IN 2017, St. Vincent released *Masseduction*, Annie Clark's take on the double-edged pleasures of 24/7 spectacle. "I can't turn off what turns me on," she sang, a thoroughly modern update on 57-channels-and-nothing-on media anxiety, or Thomas Jerome Newton mesmerised before his bank of televisions. Leeds four-piece Yard Act have titled their debut album *The Overload*, but it means something slightly different to them: these songs aren't about jittery, post-modern razzle-dazzle or the delirium that comes with too much choice, but the buckling, bowing pressure of existing in a deeply angry, polarised world. "The overload of discontent/ The constant burden of making sense," sings frontman James Smith on the title track, his bandmates chanting along in the all-in-it-together refrain. "It won't relent/It won't repent/How to remain in dissonance."

"These songs are about the buckling, bowing pressure of existing in a deeply angry world."

Yard Act came together in September 2019 when bassist Ryan Needham moved into James Smith's spare room (guitarist Sam Shipstone and drummer Jay Russell complete the line-up). With the pandemic shutting off the usual outlets for a band on the move, their first releases felt pent-up, watchful, their anger at the world sublimated into imagining what other people were thinking. 2020's Fixer Upper, for example, was a scathing satire on a man called Graham who is suspicious of "foreign" surnames and "media degrees". It was clear what side Yard Act were on: bashing their heads against the Red Wall, raging through a post-Brexit world, knowing they shouldn't probably mock but unable to stop themselves mentioning "poundshop terracotta frogs" and signs that read "Prosecco O'Clock".

From the start, *The Overload* has a similar eye for detail behind its Jarvis Cocker glasses. Lyrically, it's not hard to draw lines between Smith and his ancestors – John Cooper Clarke, Mark E Smith, Ian Dury, Jason Williamson – and if he's not quite fully marinaded in the multi-storey car parks and pub ashtrays, these songs foreground a funny, alert writer.

There are, admittedly, moments that are so on the nose you can feel the cartilage crunching, but they always come with a spry, springy run-up to the punch. "Are you seriously still trying to kid me that all culture will just be fine/When all that's left is knobheads morris dancing to Sham 69?" asks Smith on Dead Horse. It's not subtle, but it vividly suggests Cool Britannia asleep on a pile of coats at a party, a moustache magic-marked across its face while everyone laughs. In the background, they mimic the famously overused "Woo! Yeah!" drum break, like it's the best you can do when all the shelves are empty. It feels like a sad break-up letter to a country incapable of looking anywhere but backwards.

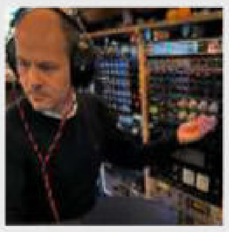
The sense it could all kick off is embedded in their tense, minimal scree. This is a band who, musically speaking, like their New York sketchy and ungentrified, their Manchester post-war and unregenerated, their London piled high with bin-bags and rats. They stalk a world of old-fashioned diseases – thanks to Smith's bone-dry delivery alone "it appears we've both got gout" is one of the album's funniest lines – the vitamin-deprived beats and loops needing a couple of oranges, a few more minutes under sunlight.

Yet like Sleaford Mods (their closest living relative), they build a whole crumbling world out of fragments and scrap. Payday, with its rough-hewn Blockheads chorus, lays into gentrification, guerrilla gardening ("growing your own lettuces in the potholes on the road") thin compensation for all the misery and inequality around it. Rich, built around a threadbare riff and mocking handclaps, skims across the surface of entitlement, before the corporate corruption kicks in on The Incident and Quarantine The Sticks (with Billy Nomates on backing vocals). Land Of The Blind, meanwhile, is bargain-basement trip-hop, a lyric about a commemorative 50p hiding a bigger story of political sleight of hand, grand acts of misdirection.

Yet just when you think you have the measure of Yard Act, the record's tone subtly shifts. Tall Poppies is about the village golden boy – popular with the girls, scouted by Crewe Alexandra – who never leaves home, whose comfortable life might, according to punk ethics, seem wasted. Yet while Smith – who left his own personal village near Warrington to study music production at Leeds College of Music – can't help moments of jeering pity ("Which comes first/Counselling/Or the keys in the bowl?"), he tells this story with real empathy, its central figure not cut down by the singer's scything wit but the same grim things that blight human lives everywhere. If it begins as a cross between Eat Y'self Fitter and Not Waving But Drowning, it slowly blurs out into dreaminess and vibraphone, unexpectedly reminiscent of Tindersticks' short story My Sister.

It's closing track, 100% Endurance, that's most surprising, however. Initially grimy – a hangover, a sofa – the narrator suddenly recalls what happened on last night's news: "Basically, they discovered there were others just like us/Other beings, other creatures/Other planets and other species who had other gods that they believed in." The cosmic joke is that none of these other entities know why they are in the universe either. It's like The Streets doing Starman, the sheer shared pointlessness of existence not a reason for despair but for beautiful unity (even if Graham – him again – insists on being armed to meet the new arrivals).

With *The Overload*, Yard Act pull off a treacherous balancing act: describing a world that doesn't like nuance while ensuring they don't just end up shouting slogans and pieties in response. Anger is an energy, but unlike so many, Yard Act aren't using it to propel themselves off the edge of a cliff. Instead, it fuels an exhilarating record by a band not only thriving under pressure but already finding new ways to adapt to its force.



BACK STORY: HIDDEN IN THE SAND

- *The Overload* was recorded with Ali Chant (above), Bristol-based producer, engineer and mixer who has also worked with P.J. Harvey, Aldous Harding and Gruff Rhys. Yet surprisingly, it was his work with Arizona's Americana heroes Giant Sand that was key in drawing Yard Act to him. "The stuff that Yard Act get pegged with the most is probably the stuff I listen to the least," explains James Smith. "I mainly listen to Americana and alt-country and rap music. Giant Sand – especially the stuff with the Calexico rhythm section… I've just liked the songs for a long time."

Courtesy Next Wave Management

JAMES SPEAKS! SMITH ON COURTNEY BARNETT, CULTIVATING VEG AND ELTON JOHN…

YARD ACT 2022
THE OVERLOAD OF DISCONTENT THE CONSTANT BURDEN OF MAKING SENSE
SHAM 69
HERSHAM BOYS
PROSECC
O' CLOCK

ELIN
TYRES
REE FITTING
EL BALANCING
TURE REPAIRS
SAFETY CHECK
ATTER

Yard Act's James Smith: he likes a verbal scrap.

"I hope I end up like Elton."

James Smith speaks to **Victoria Segal**.

Your former band was named after John Cooper Clarke's Post-War Glamour Girl – how much of an influence is he?

"My dad gave me his records, the CDs of *Snap Crackle And Bop* and *Disguise In Love*, and I connected with them a lot, the humour and the flow of it. I always loved Ian Dury's lyrics, too, and then stuff like MF Doom, Wu-Tang Clan and Eminem. Courtney Barnett was quite a big one: when she came out, I was trying to do that style of writing and her breaking through really encouraged that. She's a really good lyricist. And I guess when I was younger, Alex Turner and Jarvis Cocker. When you can relate to it, and you realise that you can say those things and you can find some interest in using quite blunt language – that's quite exciting."

There's a lot of empathy in a song like Tall Poppies – how does that fit with the rage elsewhere?

"There are a few times when I quite overtly stick the boot into people I don't agree with and I'm not particularly proud of that. Overall, I want to show empathy for people, and I want to observe. I don't want to tell people that I'm right and they're wrong. Tall Poppies draws on my youth, reflecting on one way I could have gone if I hadn't left the village [Lymm, Cheshire]. That stuff kind of shapes you and I don't think you realise that unless you're forced to – or you decide to write a really long song about it."

Is Payday's line about "growing your own lettuces in the potholes on the road" a dig at gentrification?

"The gentrification of growing vegetables. Like, pottery is now the definition of being middle-class, but people just used to be potters. They had to make their own cups. It wasn't a status symbol. And it's the same with growing things in your garden. Cultivating vegetables when we're going to end up with all these food shortages, it's a skill that they should be teaching at school. Instead, it's left to the suburban gardeners. Survival things are subverted and turned into hobbies."

The Overload often feels overlapping conversations – do you collect other people's words?

"I am a note-taker and I do get a lot out of talking to people. I had to take my car to be scrapped the other week and the man at the scrapyard was just something else. He was just a full-pelt conspiracy theorist. He shouted out "I'm Indiana bastard Jones" at one point – I don't know what he meant. There was just gold coming out of his mouth. It's just really nice to see what angle everyone comes at the world from. I take notes on my phone now; I used to write things down on paper but my pockets weren't big enough."

How do you feel about Elton John declaring himself a Yard Act fan?

"I love Elton John. It just blew my mind. I'd love to write some lyrics and see if he'd let Bernie have a week off or something. I can't really explain how I've come to be in Elton John's orbit. He seems like a good guy. He still loves new music and that's ace. I hope I end up like Elton."

Bonobo

★★★★

Fragments

NINJA TUNE. CD/DL/LP

Bleak, soulful epics and rhythmic invention from understated electronic star.

By stealth, Brighton downtempo auteur Bonobo (AKA Simon Green) has become one of the biggest draws in electronic music, his pervasive urban melancholia balanced by a sophisticated rhythmic sensibility. Pieced together in the Californian desert, Green's seventh full-length is a richly downcast experience, his deft arrangements recalling the powerful, orchestrated cloudbursts of Curtis Mayfield's solo debut. Green's production is expert – check the subtle harp and saxophone interplay on closer Day By Day, underscoring the bittersweet vibe of Kadhja Bonet's vocal – but he knows when to pull back and let his vocalist take the foreground, as on Jamila Woods' sharply resonant Tides. More immediate thrills, meanwhile, surface on his hardest-edged dancefloor workouts yet. The ever-intensifying electronic throbs of Age Of Phase, the urgent, house-y ebb-and-flow of Rosewood and the cathartic peaks of Otomo offer moments of relief from *Fragments*' often intense songcraft.

Stevie Chick

Cat Power

★★★★

Covers

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Chan Marshall returns to her off-label interpretative duties.

CAT POWER / COVERS

Covers have always been a vital part of Chan Marshall's work, not only peppering the albums devoted to her own songs but also forming the body of three dedicated collections since 2000's *The Covers Record* re-pointed the concept for a Generation X audience. This album again showcases Marshall's exceptional ability to burrow right into the marrow of a song, whether it's Lana Del Rey's White Mustang or Kitty Wells' It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels. She runs a knife right along the spine of Frank Ocean's Bad Religion or The Replacements' Here Comes A Regular, removing the soul in one piece; her voice, as ever, is a thing of expressive, exhausted beauty. She's equally direct in reworking her own Hate from 2006's *The Greatest*, here renamed Unhate and spiked with a real shudder of retrospective horror. It's Marshall's world: for a short time, these songs come to live in it.

Victoria Segal

Eels

★★★★

Extreme Witchcraft

PIAS/E WORKS. CD/DL/LP

Re-teamed with co-producer John Parish on studio album number 14.

Ever resourceful with song concepts, E, AKA Mark Oliver Everett, delivers again on his percussive, groove-rich latest. Stumbling Bee portrays him as an ailing autumnal insect, Strawberries & Popcorn celebrates freedom of sustenance post break-up, and What It Isn't builds to a satisfyingly splenetic take-down of that vacuous utterance "it is what it is". Parish, a studio "mad scientist" says E, brings extra edge, fuzzier guitars, funk (Grandfather Clock Strikes Twelve) and idiosyncrasy to time-served Eels devices such as super-dry drums and simple chord sequences, while I Know You're Right and Learning While I Lose are stoical studies in emotional intelligence. Part happy break-up LP, part honest look in the mirror, *Extreme Witchcraft* works magic. "I got gold/And truth be told/It's not just in my teeth," sings E at one point. And he's right.

James McNair

Seth Lakeman

★★★★

Make Your Mark

HONOUR OAK. CD/DL/LP

West Country folk star reveals the soul beneath the style on eleventh album.

SETH LAKEMAN

Fifteen years or so since his dashing arrival as what the more fanciful media described as "the poster boy of folk" amid frantic bouts of fiddle thrash and tales of Devon legends, Lakeman's inspirations haven't altered hugely. His beloved West Country surroundings remain at the heart of the album, though the slightly fierce cover image does reflect a more measured and serious style, in which he reveals more of himself than previously, becoming a much-improved songwriter in the process. There's real intent – anger even – in songs like Hollow, Higher We Aspire, Underground and Coming For You Soon, while the heartfelt sentiments of Fallen Friend and Bound To Someone are given plenty of breathing space by some excellent arrangements and sensitive but telling contributions from Benji Kirkpatrick (bouzouki and banjo), Ben Nicholls (double bass), Toby Kearney (drums) and Alex Hart (vocals).

Colin Irwin

Various

★★★

Snoop Dogg Presents: The Algorithm

DEF JAM. CD/DL

West Coast legend's epic showcase of Def Jam's past, present and future.

Snoop Dogg
ALGORITHM

Expecting Snoop Dogg to come up with something ground-breaking in his 50th year may be asking too much. Reggae/gospel dalliances aside, Def Jam's new 'executive creative consultant' has rarely deviated far from his long-proven algorithm for success: languid raps ÷ pimp + murder + weed anthems x booming sub-Dre beats = hella money. There's no change as he cameos his way through an album of star-studded but largely by-numbers major label rap/R&B without breaking sweat. Yet jewels lurk amid the imitation pearls: a super-smooth meta soul duet between Eric Bellinger and Usher, the speaker-rattling down-low of Snoop's veterans supergroup Mount Westmore (with Ice Cube, E-40 and Too $hort) and, buried at the death, a spirited showcase for Mississippi soul force Camino – one to really watch.

Andy Cowan

Bonobo: urban melancholy and hard thrills.

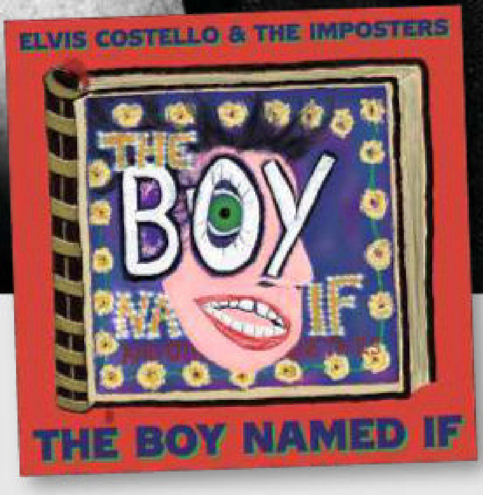
Grant Spanier

Altered ego: Elvis Costello and his imaginary friend.

Mark Seliger

Fire and skill

Costello and trusty trio hammer through a set of dark, guitar-fronted songs brimming with melody. By **Tom Doyle**.



Elvis Costello & The Imposters

★★★★

The Boy Named If

EMI. CD/DL/LP

THOSE LOOKING for a recap of the last couple of episodes of The Costello Show should be reminded that it's been a great season so far. 2018's *Look Now* mixed lively guitar pop with co-written Bacharach ballads to excellent effect, while 2020's *Hey Clockface* saw our central character travelling solo to Helsinki to deliver some of his best rattling, attitude-y rockers in years.

The narrative curve continues with *The Boy Named If*. Costello and co-producer Sebastian Krys have had reason to revisit the singer's late-'70s past in recent years: remixing This Year's Girl from the original tapes for the title song of David Simon's The Deuce; reworking the whole of 1978's *This Year's Model* with guest Hispanic singers as last autumn's *Spanish Model*.

All of the above sets the tone for the most energised performances Costello has committed to record in a long time and – despite his protestations that The Imposters are an *entirely* different band (bassist Davey Faragher replaced the defrocked Bruce Thomas back in 2001) – his most classic Attractions-like album since 1994's *Brutal Youth*. Steve Nieve's Vox Continental organ gets heavy use, and the sexagenarian Pete Thomas is drumming with crackling energy. Farewell, OK is a thumping Merseybeat curtain-raiser that comes over like The Beatles playing Hippy Hippy Shake at the Star-Club. Meanwhile, the bandleader intensely attacks his trademark Fender Jazzmaster guitar in the riff and (rare) solo of the thrilling, '60s-soulful What If I Can't Give You Anything But Love?, one of those Costello songs that you can't quite believe isn't somehow a cover version.

In many of the lyrics here, murky emotions are wrapped in rich, often second- or third-person characterisations, although the storylines are typically open ended. Often, these wholly unreliable narrators are either toxic males or women tangled up with them: the café table voyeur in My Most Beautiful Mistake might even be trying to lure a waitress into porn ("You'll be up on that screen for eternity"). Elsewhere the male protagonist of achingly beautiful country soul ballad Paint The Red Rose Blue is involved in a different kind of degradation: a slow eroding of his wife's spirit until only sadness remains.

Costello says the title track refers to "your imaginary friend… the one you blame for the hearts you break, including your own". He's played with alter ego before, not least in *Brutal Youth*'s My Science Fiction Twin, but the secret self in this song is both elusive and mischievous. All the same, amid the twisty, *Imperial Bedroom*-ish arrangement, the singer is keen to summon him: "Imagine me/And I'll imagine you, too," he belts out with real gusto.

It's powerful and provocative stuff, and utter proof that Costello's creative fire is still raging. Against all reasonable odds, Elvis (at 67) sounds younger than yesterday.

Out of exile: Urge Overkill's King Roeser (left) and Nash Kato.

Just say yes

Kurt Cobain's favourite haute couture riffmeisters return.
By **Keith Cameron**.

Urge Overkill

★★★★

Oui

OMNIVORE. CD/DL/LP

THE FIRST Urge Overkill album in over 10 years opens, bewilderingly, with Wham!'s fluff-pop smash Freedom, lightly amped into a '90s TV theme. Elevating what resembles a bonus track into pole position feels especially odd given UO's prior experience of being eclipsed by an incongruous cover version, when the Midwest trio's 1992 take on Neil Diamond's Girl You'll Be A Woman Soon got Pulp Fictionalised.

But perhaps the George Michael song has special resonance for Urge's erstwhile estranged frontmen. "You could take me to hell and back/Just as long as we're together" sums up Nash Kato and King Roeser's turbulent 30-year creative liaison, now resumed following a low-profile decade. 2011's *Rock & Roll Submarine* yielded solid enough returns 15 years after the band's messy split, but *Oui* seems more energised by the participants' real-time perspective than simply emulating the glitz and glory of 1993's *Saturation*. Notwithstanding the continued absence of beloved drummer Blackie Onassis, the warm, brittle groove of A Necessary Evil palpably reconnects us with the same people who emerged from the narcotic wreckage of 1995's *Exit The Dragon*: definitely older, possibly wiser, hearts still intact. "It's killing me, but that's all right," quavers Roeser, his vulnerable croon nourished by a goat's head soup of creamy guitar and electric piano.

UO's co-leaders have learnt that they offer more together than apart. The rampaging Follow My Shadow, a shotgun shack-up between Creedence and Cheap Trick, has them trading lines and eventually fusing into one voice, an exhortatory Urge classic to file alongside The Kids Are Insane or Positive Bleeding. As befits the accretion of life experience, the pair's complementary roles interweave: rakish Kato gets rueful on Totem Pole ("Perhaps I shoulda lived more like some kinda family man/It grounds you, or so I've been told"), while Forgiven, a flared-nostril blast of *Some Girls* swagger, sees Urge's self-proclaimed 'quiet person' Roeser channelling AC/DC, Led Zeppelin and the Stones all in the same song.

Between them, King and Nash have imbibed enough soul, punk and classic rock to patent their own radio format. URGE FM peaks here with A Prisoner's Dilemma, a horn-flecked slab of minutely orchestrated Steely Dan boogie that's Kato's prurient take on the case of Amanda Knox ("In them Tuscan hills/You can't buy a thrill"). The moodswings coalesce for an elegiac final stretch, with Litany back on *Exit The Dragon*'s uneasy street ("Everybody knows he's afraid of dying alone") and the spare, edgy Snow a spooked closer.

No lesser authority than Chrissie Hynde once described Urge Overkill as "the gallant men of rock". Longtime fans will certainly appreciate the old-fashioned courtesy of a comeback album that honours the group's mythology and wears its flaws honestly, yet also feels authentically present and still dares to dream. "Let's go, the future's calling and it's looking alright," they proclaim on Follow My Shadow. *Oui*, c'est magnifique.

QUANTIC & NIDIA GÓNGORA
Almas Conectadas

Quantic & Nidia Góngora

★★★★

Almas Conectadas

TRU THOUGHTS. CD/DL/LP

UK producer and Colombian folk singer reprise 2017 collaboration more rootsily.

After a late-2000s stint residing in the Colombian city of Cali, Quantic, AKA Will Holland, inevitably let Latin-American flavour flood into his work, compiling two fabulous collections of vintage cumbia and, on 2017's *Curao*, teaming up with Góngora, a silver-voiced folk singer from the Afro-Colombian coastal community of Timbiquí. There, Holland subtly infused programmed beats into Nidia's native South Pacific marimba music, with delicious results. For this equally irresistible rematch, however, he ditches the electronica for a more organic approach, preferring sumptuous strings and galloping hand percussion (see the title track's elegant, electric guitar-arpeggiating folk rock), but also opening up his charge to other musics. El Chiclan sashays to a sassy medium-paced samba rhythm, while Adorar La Sangre finesses an extraordinary, slow-stomping blues, like Jesse Mae Hemphill gone orchestral. With Ms Góngora presiding with effortless grace and range, and Quantic's string arrangements nudging towards Axelrod excellence, *Almas Conectadas* exudes exceptional class.

Andrew Perry

Deep Purple

★★★

Turning To Crime

EARMUSIC. CD/DL/LP

The Purps' first ever cover versions LP.

In 2018, Deep Purple frontman Ian Gillan made a carefree R&B covers album with his pre-fame band The Javelins. *Turning To Crime*, replete with sleeve 'mugshots' of each of Purple's mock felons, seems refreshingly keen to prolong the fun. Though Love's 7 And 7 Is and Fleetwood Mac's Oh Well have perhaps been more sparkily covered by Alice Cooper and Haim respectively, Purple's take on Huey 'Piano' Smith's Rockin' Pneumonia And The Boogie Woogie Flu is joyous, while the album's cache of musical quotes – keyboardist Don Airey's mischievous solos nod at Del Shannon's Runaway, that hoary old chestnut Smoke On The Water and more – suggest a band totally at ease with itself 53 years in. Elsewhere, an emphatic big band jazz take on Let The Good Times Roll cements the sense that this is a Purple album like no other.

James McNair

Natalie Jane Hill

★★★★

Solely

DEAR LIFE. CD/DL/LP/MC

Intimate chamber folk from Austin newcomer.

Comparisons might be traditionally invidious, but they can also be tantalising: how about, for instance, the idea of Karen Dalton singing Nick Drake's Way To Blue? That's the rough MO of Plants And Flowers That Do Not Grow Here, one of the outstanding tracks on this second album by Texan Natalie Jane Hill. Hill's husky tone recalls Dalton at her least demonstrative, and she backs herself with some exceptionally artful fingerpicking. The prevailing air is understated, occasionally to the point of elegant drowsiness; To Feel Alone, with vibraphone and pedal steel flecks, has something of Tim Buckley circa Dream Letter, too. *Solely* isn't the sort of record that aggressively sells itself, so maybe we should do the hard work for it, and for Hill: an auspicious late entry in 2021's singer-songwriter stakes, worth keeping close for the winter.

John Mulvey

Pan Daijing

★★★

Tissues

PAN. DL/LP

Studio version of Berlin artist's 2019 avant-opera.

Starting in the noise cassette underground before unleashing her haunted voice and queasy-listening debut *Lack* (2017), Pan Daijing has forged a fierce sonic signature combining elements of techno, poetry, industrial and ambient music. 2021's superb second album *Jade* corralled these influences into an eerily textured, electronics-and-spoken word opus of Laurie Anderson-esque introspection. The China-born Berlin resident's sound installation and performance pieces have also appeared at art galleries globally. *Tissues* premiered in Tate Modern's subterranean Tanks space: a five-act experimental play performed by Daijing plus an ensemble of opera singers, dancers and actors "who together lead us on a journey into the mind of a wayward protagonist." This hour-long excerpt inevitably loses that multimedia narrative heft, yet its marriage of dronescape synths and Chinese libretto – voices alternately soaring, skittering and sorrowful – still casts an otherworldly spell.

Manish Agarwal

Jerod Herzog

Callum Easter

★★★

System

MOSHI MOSHI. CD/DL/LP

Pro footballer-turned-politicised lo-fi evangelist makes debut album proper.

"I keep thinking of the hearts of men/I keep thinking how to start again", sings Leith, Edinburgh-raised Callum Easter on state-of-our-nations address What You Think?. A one-man band using cheap keys and beatboxes to craft galvanising anthems on loveably shaky foundations, he brings charisma, positivity, heart and wit to succinct, hooky songs with shades of The Stooges, T.Rex and Primal Scream circa *Screamadelica*. There's a Tony Visconti-raids-thrift-store choogle to Little Honey, while the Alex Harvey-with-a-Portastudio vibe of Find 'Em A Home and shards of cranked harmonica that cut through the dubby, Weatherall-remix feel of This Feeling mark Easter out as an insubordinate individual of taste. Best of all is the call to arms title track, a budget-gospel floor-filler if ever there was.

James McNair

Palace

★★★★

Shoals

FICTION. CD/DL/LP

Third album from eclectic London trio (not Will Oldham's Palace incarnation).

Over two wildly varied albums, Palace plotted a singular course, evoking the sweeping euphoria of White Lies, while taking a succession of twinkling tangents akin to Years & Years or Fleet Foxes. Third time around, they're even more difficult to pin down. Leo Wyndham's ethereal wisp glides over the insistent, hook-laden Lover (Don't Let Me Down), which begins in darkness before bursting into a light-drenched denouement. With each member contributing separately, there are diversions aplenty, often in the same song. Salt moves at a funereal pace, blending layered vocals similar to 10cc's I'm Not In Love, spacious Jon Hopkins-style piano, distorted guitar, randomly shouted backing vocals, and the promise "I'll be there for you" to offer something special. With so many fragments to assemble, *Shoals* takes time to fully sink in. When it does, it feels like Palace's first significant work.

John Aizlewood

Claire Cronin

★★★★

Bloodless

ORINDAL. CD/DL/LP

Second album of haunted Americana from LA-based musician and writer.

On first listen, the singing voice of Claire Cronin has an eerie familiarity, its highwire waver redolent of Jean Ritchie's Appalachian wail or Karen Dalton's lonesome keen. It's the first thing you notice until you're hardly noticing it at all, as you're gradually pulled into her ominous, uncanny tales. On her critically acclaimed 2019 album *Big Dread Moon*, those tales were more specific in their imagery (werewolves, ghosts, biting teeth). Here, the dread is more psychological, uncertain. Recorded at home in Berkeley by Cronin and her husband Ezra Buchla amid political and social turbulence, and the worst wildfires in California history, it's an intense, hallucinatory record, sparse and scarred arrangements of sinister, other-worldly lullabies that don't always make exact sense ("Do you hurt the furniture because it frightens you," she sings on No Forcefield) but unsettle even more as a result.

Andrew Male

Pearly Gate Music

★★★★

Mainly Gestalt Pornography

BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

Second album from Father John Misty's brother.

It seemed so simple in 2010, when Zachary Tillman released his first album as Pearly Gate Music. Buoyed by its encouraging reception, he crafted demos for the follow-up, so strong that Richard Swift was enticed to produce. Then, fuelled by an erratic lifestyle and the rise of his brother Josh, first as J. Tillman and then as Father John Misty, came mental breakdown. Several wasted years later, Tillman married, became a father and returned to work. Partly songs intended for the now-deceased Swift and partly new material, the results vindicate a considerable, seemingly lost talent. Stefani gallops like Scott Walker grappling with Jacques Brel, before ending with a heart-stoppingly gorgeous coda. Old No.22 is simultaneously experimental and accessible, but The Moon shows he can do earthy too. It's good to have him back and hopefully well. Artistically at least, it's been worth the wait.

John Aizlewood

Die Wilde Jagd

★★★

Atem

BUREAU B. LP

Berlin-based sound artist's pulsing one-track exploration of life's elixir.

Sebastian Lee Philipp reveals himself as a master of ambient suspense on his fourth LP. Commissioned for Tilburg's 2021 Roadburn Festival, the composer/producer developed this live-recorded, unbroken 45-minute piece examining the ever-pertinent "science of breathing". In contrast to the modern psych stylings and Krautrock rhythms of 2020's *Haut*, the drone-centred *Atem* finds its continuous low hum slyly intersected with techno, naturalist touches – rushing waves, distant ships' sirens, the hisses and hums of whispering jungles – summoned from synths, and wooden organ pipes controlled via air compressors. Bisected by the skittering abstractions of cellist Lih Qun Wong and the perceptive grooves of percussionist Ran Levari, it builds and builds before taking an unexpected turn at the death. A transportive, celebratory emission, *Atem* taps into the heart of existence.

Andy Cowan

Henry Parker

★★★★

Lammas Fair

CUP & RING. CD/DL/LP

Second album from the Yorkshire-based metal guitarist-turned-folkie.

Henry Parker
Lammas Fair

One can tell that Parker is a serious musician from the LP's credits, which include his guitar tunings – handy for those who know their DADGAD from their DGDGBD. What Parker does so effectively is to blend ancient with early-'70s and modern styles. You have to have some of the former or it isn't folk music, but in these mainly self-penned songs he sings of the seasons' cycles and of characters amid landscapes with a modern twist while retaining traditional integrity. There's a touch of Bert Jansch about his finely articulated picking on the instrumental Blackthorn; he delivers a stark reading of the ages-old tale Death And The Lady; and on Nine Herbs Charm he deploys flute, double bass and congas in a near-jazzy groove. The song has echoes of Nick Drake, but Parker is already developing an original voice.

Mike Barnes

Eve Adams

★★★★

Metal Bird

BASIN ROCK. CD/DL/LP

Los Angeles-based songwriter takes flight on third album.

THERE'S A deceptive antique charm to *Metal Bird*, a vintage surface crackle suggesting crepe and fox fur, silk and gin, brushed drums and cocktail glasses. Yet if Eve Adams' songs risk falling into all the old David Lynch/James Ellroy moves, they find new shades of noir, sharing more with Julia Holter, Cassandra Jenkins or Nina Nastasia than any lounge music fantasist. The edges of 2019's *Candy Colored Doom* have sharpened: her voice and guitar sheer off into abrasion on Metal Bird; Butterflies tracks a rising and falling dread while A Walk In The Park's jazzy shuffle is disconcertingly unresolved. "You would help me out so much if you slept on my couch tonight," she sings on Woman On Your Mind, "you can wash your jacket in the laundry in the morning". Like so much of *Metal Bird*, it's a double-edged invitation, an ambiguous welcome to Adams' turbulent airspace.

Victoria Segal

Eve Adams: finding new shades of noir.

Jake Xerxes Fussell: honouring the past to make something new.

I am the lore

North Carolina's songfinder general weaves new folk art out of old material. By **John Mulvey**.

Jake Xerxes Fussell

★★★★

Good And Green Again

PARADISE OF BACHELORS. CD/DL/LP

"FOLK MUSIC," wrote Bob Dylan in one of the more trustworthy passages of Chronicles, "was reality of a more brilliant dimension… It was life magnified. Folk music was all I needed to exist. Trouble was, there wasn't enough of it."

Jake Xerxes Fussell, a singing folklorist from Georgia who currently resides in North Carolina, would probably beg to differ. Back in 2019, when his exceptional third album *Out Of Sight* was released, Fussell told MOJO about the boundless reserves of folk songs still to be reclaimed. "The last thing I worry about is running out of material," he said.

Fussell's the sort of folk singer who makes an art of picking the richest songs, honouring their historical and cultural contexts, and making something new and idiosyncratic out of them. He has the charm of the best bar raconteur, a storyteller who can sell fantastical yarns in a companionable way. *Out Of Sight* featured his version of a Florida fishmonger's cry, where shoppers were promised mullets with diamonds in their mouths. Magic realism transforming the everyday, then and now; life magnified.

Good And Green Again moves the narrative on a little, while staying essentially true to his roots (Fussell's father was also a folklorist). The tunes are still naggingly memorable, but often less convivial, more melancholy. Nineteenth-century soldiers make lingering goodbyes to their sweethearts; mills burn down. The most familiar song is The Golden Willow Tree, a 17th-century naval adventure also known as, among other things, The Golden Vanity. A cabin boy swims across to sink an enemy ship by boring holes in its hull, promised rewards by the captain for his bravery. In some versions, the cabin boy succeeds and survives, but Fussell offers no such consolation. After nine looping, elegantly unhurried minutes, the boy is betrayed and left to drown.

There are affinities with Nathan Salsburg and Steve Gunn, and their sometime collaborator James Elkington, the British multi-instrumentalist who produces *Good And Green Again*. Fussell has been subtly enhancing his sound for a while now, and layers of horns, strings, piano and steel flesh out the likes of Rolling Mills Are Burning Down, without ever distracting from their core simplicity.

But even that simplicity, it transpires, can be malleable. Lyrics apart, Rolling Mills Are Burning Down barely resembles Fussell's source, a raw 1965 recording by North Carolina banjoist George Landers. The melody might as well be a Fussell original, and indeed Fussell makes his formal debut as a songwriter on four tracks here. Three of them are instrumentals, ethereal roots compositions that extend the album's dream-like atmosphere while giving gothic and ambient clichés a wide berth. One, the closing Washington, takes folk art – the words embroidered on a hooked rug from the late 19th century – and makes a song out of them that sounds as old, and as new, as everything else on this most understated of albums. "I never had a desire to write music," Fussell told MOJO in 2019. But now he does, and where he goes next will be illuminating; an emergent figure in a folk revival that keeps reinventing itself, in perpetuity.

Jake Xerxes Fussell Good and Green Again

Anaïs Mitchell

★★★★

Anaïs Mitchell

BMG. CD/DL/LP

Bonny Light Horsewoman's hypnotic, reflective first solo release since 2014.

Critically acclaimed but low-key, Mitchell had a breakthrough when her narrative album *Hadestown* became a Grammy-winning musical. Having spent 15 years on that project, when Covid hit she moved with her husband from NYC to a remote Vermont farmstead and began writing once more from her own perspective. Shimmering and lushly piano-led, Brooklyn Bridge sees her floating through the city at night, her voice blending Louise Goffin and Rickie Lee Jones. The gently acoustic Real World is where she's at now, and it's earthy, tactile and sensual, from the "real grass, real clouds over pastures" to "your real hands on my hips". Mitchell isn't starry-eyed – memories return of small-town racism, the weight of growing up female – but things have changed, and the rural life performs surprising magic. Deceptively simple, the result is a lovely thing.

Glyn Brown

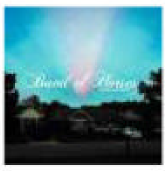
Band Of Horses

★★★★

Things Are Great

BMG. CD/DL/LP

Ben Bridwell takes his band back to their beginnings.



Based largely on the reputation of their third LP *Infinite Arms*, Band Of Horses are often tagged as Americana. Over the intervening 12 years, however, sole remaining founder Ben Bridwell has presided over a revolving door of colleagues and two ever-blander, mainstream-chasing albums. *Things Are Great*'s title alone signifies that Bridwell has moved on from its downbeat predecessor, 2016's *Why Are You OK*, but he's also executed a welcome U-turn back to the harder sound of earlier records. With yet another line-up shuffle, and Grandaddy's Jason Lytle again helping on production, Bridwell deals with relationships and friendships lost, recovered and cemented during the last five years. Leading the hardened edge of these epic indie rock songs are Bridwell's eccentric non-chords and tunings, making this easily Band Of Horses' best LP in over a decade.

Andy Fyfe

Hiss Golden Messenger

★★★★

O Come All Ye Faithful

MERGE. CD/DL/LP

MC Taylor reclaims Christmas from crass commercialism.

If not for the title and the inclusion of three traditional carols, you'd be hard pressed to mark out *O Come All Ye Faithful* as a Christmas LP. No sleigh bells, no reindeer, no Noddy Holder. Hiss Golden Messenger's MC Taylor instead sets out to tip the seasonal scales back towards quietude and reflection rather than the turbo-charged tunes blasted out in shops across the world. So intent is Taylor on allowing the listener to draw breath that his versions of CCR's Long As I Can See The Light and Shine A Light by Spiritualized make the already-contemplative originals sound like Mariah Carey by comparison. His own songs, particularly the yearning Grace, are heartfelt and relatively chipper country-folk, making the entire package a perfect accompaniment to that final ruminative dram of whisky before bed on Christmas Eve.

Andy Fyfe

Punch Brothers

★★★★

Hell On Church Street

NONESUCH. CD/DL/LP

Chris Thile's bluegrass outfit cover a covers album. Eh?

In 1983, bluegrass guitarist and singer Tony Rice released *Church Street Blues*, an album of covers including Norman Blake's title track, Dylan's One More Night and Gordon Lightfoot's Wreck Of The Edmund Fitzgerald. Both Rice and his LP were huge influences on bluegrass mavericks Punch Brothers, so while cooling their locked-down heels they re-recorded the album song for song in tribute. Rice unfortunately died on Christmas Day last year, but Punch Brothers have done him proud. Where Rice played it pretty straight with the material, Punch Brothers, as is their wont, decided to be more adventurous. Ralph McTell's Streets Of London is deconstructed to such an extent the melody is barely recognisable, while Tom Paxton's lover's lament Last Thing On My Mind becomes a skeletal stalker's manifesto. Rice would have loved it.

Andy Fyfe

Tom Rankin

Anna Von Hausswolff

★★★★

Live At Montreux Jazz Festival

SOUTHERN LORD/POMPERIPOSSA. CD/DL/LP

Banshee-voiced Swedish pipe organist in full flight.

Five years after her late friend Albin Oskarsson first petitioned Montreux Jazz Festival, Anna Von Hausswolff got the call in 2018 to support Nick Cave. Centred on the unbound gothic splendour of that year's *Dead Magic*, her six distended readings stretch her bleak folkloric lyrics and dark instrumentation to the hilt. With a similar mechanical pulse to latter-day Swans, the malevolent heft of The Mysterious Vanishing Of Electra and epic dirge Ugly And Vengeful build to almost unbearable climaxes as the gloomy Gothenburg soprano's unearthly howls and unnerving ululations echo Yma Sumac and Diamanda Galás. It's not all sturm und drang though. The beatless despair of Källans återuppståndelse shows the harmonic subtleties at play within Von Hausswolff's bewitching repertoire of dissonance and drama.

Andy Cowan

John Dwyer

★★★

Gong Splat

CASTLE FACE. CD/DL/LP

More jazz-fusion improv experiments from Oh Sees frontman and friends.

Oh Sees major domo John Dwyer confessed an ongoing obsession with mid-'70s fusion to MOJO in 2018, warning "we're starting to get more into that zone". Latterly, he's fully embraced his hankering for fusion with a series of collaborative, jazz-themed releases, of which *Gong Splat* is the best yet. With Los Angeleno musos Ryan Sawyer, Greg Coates, Wilder Zoby and Andres Renteria, Dwyer cribs liberally from Miles's *On The Corner*, *Ege Bamyasi*-era Can and Larry Young's *Lawrence Of Newark* for nine beatific, frenetic jams. As with all such improvised projects, *Gong Splat* is as much about the journey as the destination, but there's precious little meandering to Dwyer's questing. The motorik title track, the stop-start robot funk of Oneironaut and the freeform psychedelic explorations of Yuggoth Travel Agency all demonstrate Dwyer's far-out explorations to be fruitful more often than not.

Stevie Chick

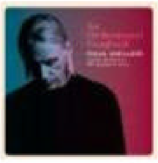
Paul Weller

★★★

An Orchestrated Songbook

POLYDOR. CD/DL/LP

All Mod Conservatoire? Jam, Style Council and solo songs crash the concert hall.



Weller is no stranger to the string section: recent albums have featured judicious orchestrations by the excellent Hannah Peel, and Peel conducted a sizeable classical group behind Weller and band at the Royal Festival Hall in October 2018, a concert released as *Other Aspects* in 2019. But here he's all in, a full-fat BBC Symphony Orchestra backing this livecast May '21 Barbican show, with arrangements by Jules Buckley. Results are mostly great – the Jam's English Rose is beautifully Vaughan Williamsy; *Confessions Of A Pop Group* gem It's A Very Deep Sea is reimagined and reinvigorated – but there are moments where the charts could bear being much edgier, and the guest spots are variable: Celeste understated on an epically pastoral Wild Wood; James Morrison quite the opposite on *Stanley Road*'s Broken Stones. In the midst of it, Weller himself sails regally on, in fine-grained voice, and the songs are, happily, bomb(ast)-proof.

Danny Eccleston

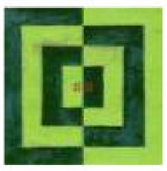
Pinegrove

★★★

||:||

ROUGH TRADE. CD/DL/LP

Crisis time on New Jersey guitar-rockers' sixth studio album.



Frontman Evan Stephens Hall has described Pinegrove as "the midpoint between math rock and Americana". Aside from a periodic leaning toward Wilco/Jayhawks (and '90s cult legends Souled American) models of country, arguably a better comparison is Teenage Fanclub, given Pinegrove's alignment with Big Star's plangent sound; imagine the *Radio City* line-up covering *Sister Lovers/Third* songs. The LP's title references numerical simplicity and stability during a time of what seems like personal angst piled on top of global anxiety and chaos. Hall explores his anger and depression through mostly downbeat but frequently beautiful ballads, such as the waltz-styled Orange, inspired by Oregon's skies during 2020's firestorms, and the delicate Respirate: "No one's gonna rescue us/No one'll care if we spend our lives up," Hall wails. "But I care now/ I'm not gonna let you down."

Martin Aston

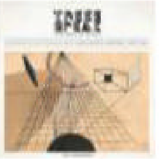
Trees Speak

★★★★

Vertigo Of Flaws

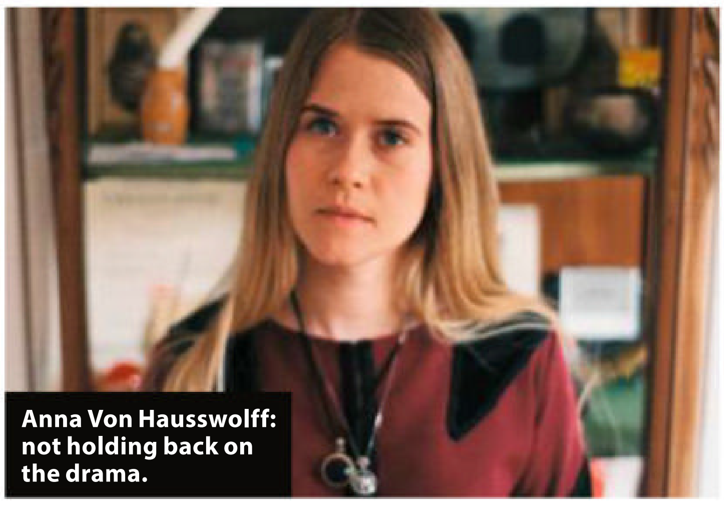
SOUL JAZZ. CD/DL/LP

Tucson, Arizona's experimentalists drop double-album mindblower!



The core Trees duo Daniel Martin Diaz and Damian Diaz have rustled up four long-players now in little more than a year. This latest is by far their most ambitious, spanning 90 minutes of profoundly exploratory instrumental speculation. Where its pocket-sized predecessors have flagged up an interest in motorik, rippling synths and Axelrod-style widescreen arrangement, *Vertigo Of Flaws* runs a wider gamut, touching on BBC Radiophonic Workshop scoring (Computer Garden), Air's future-retro synth-pop (Imaginary Forces), spaced R&B groove abstraction *à la* Joe Meek's *I Hear A New World* (Interference) and early Kraftwerk-esque soundwave experimentation (Integration). On the LP's second disc, things get properly whacked out: Threnody's beatless, treated trumpets recall 23 Skidoo's *Seven Songs*, while Transfiguration's blast of free chorale borders on Sun Ra. Among wild wanderings, Trees Speak frequently snap back to a crisp, jazzy bassline groove, making their whole far-out adventure hard to resist.

Andrew Perry



Anna Von Hausswolff: not holding back on the drama.

Gianluca Grasselli, Todd Taylor

UNDERGROUND

BY ANDREW MALE

Duane Pitre

★★★★★

Omniscient Voices

IMPREC. DL/LP

The New Orleans sound artist returns with a stunning work for piano and electronics.

Fans of such contemporary minimalist composers as Kali Malone or Caterina Barbieri will likely have encountered Duane Pitre. His 2009 compilation, *The Harmonic Series*, reintroduced the ancient tuning pattern of just intonation – previously associated with '60s/70s 'minimalists' like La Monte Young and Terry Riley – to this new generation of young musicians. Since 2012's *Feel Free* album, Pitre has combined traditional acoustic with modern electronic 'improvisation' and this new work, influenced by New York composer Morton Feldman's use of tonal clusters, is the latest result. Although composed of five pieces of varying lengths, offering more harmonic variety, this remains a complete, immersive work, a blissful pulsing conversation between the organic and the electronic that is simultaneously amorphous yet distinct. It's hard to know where you are in the record other than to know that you feel warm and safe and that when it's over you need to play it again.

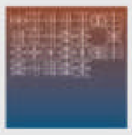
ALSO RELEASED

William Tyler

★★★

Frozen Shelter

LONGFORM EDITIONS/ BANDCAMP. DL



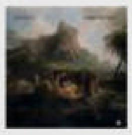
Since launching in June 2018, Andrew Khedoori's ongoing series of online-only, deep-listening releases continues to delight and beguile. Of the latest batch, this new work by the Nashville-born guitarist William Tyler is perhaps the least expected and most surprising; a series of short discordant sound experiments leading into 35 minutes of ghostly dancehall atmospherics that waltz and shimmer with an almost tangible presence.

Padang Food Tigers

★★★★

God's Plenty

SHHPUMA. CD/DL



Recent collaborators with Andrew Tuttle, the London duo of Stephen Lewis and Spencer Grady now release their fifth and arguably finest album. Lewis plays dobro and lap steel, Grady plays banjo: ancient folk sounds that they combine with organ drones, radio chatter and field recordings to create something surreal, otherworldly, and utterly beguiling.

Hiroshi Minami/ Eiko Ishibashi

★★★★

Gasping_Sighing_Sobbing

BANDCAMP. DL

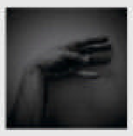
Japanese pianist Minami collaborates with singer/ songwriter/ improviser Ishibashi on a series of ambient jazz dreams, the wistful melancholy of Minami's abstract keyboard melodies blending with the radio-wave futurism of Ishibashi's electronics and Daisuke Ijichi's warm acoustic bass. A jazz kissa soundtrack for the Japanese space programme that never happened.

Richard Skelton

★★★★

A Guidonian Hand

CORBEL STONE PRESS/BANDCAMP. CD/DL



In medieval music, the Guidonian hand was a palmistry-like mnemonic device used to teach sight-singing. Here, hyperborean sound artist Skelton imagines this hexachord appendage as a valley landscape, using the scrape, wail and moan of cello, woodwind and bowed cymbal to chart its stunted pathways and conjure up its unearthly climate. *AM*

Sun O))): a Penrose staircase in sound, encouraging benign meditation.

Ronald Dick

Drone attack

Robed doom messiahs channel feedback as an irresistible force on newly released radio session. By **Andrew Perry**.

Sunn O)))

★★★★

Metta, Benevolence

SOUTHERN LORD. CD/DL/LP

MAXIMUM VOLUME has again yielded maximum results for cowled cacophonists Sunn O))) on this release of a panoramically deafening 2019 radio session.

Named after the low-budget rockers' preferred amplification provider in their native Pacific Northwest, the duo of Stephen O'Malley and Greg Anderson first debuted on 1999's *The Grimmrobe Demos* ostensibly unleashing unmediated torrents of downtuned feedback.

From rudimentary origins, they've become respected overlords of drone music, their live performances somehow bridging ribald metal theatricality and scarifying occult ritual, ever transgressive in their aural extremity. They've rattled the foundations of arts theatres such as London's Barbican, and been validated for their heaviness and dexterity by Scott Walker on 2014's intricately scored team-up, *Soused*.

In 2019, they followed a sequence of digitally assembled albums featuring an international cast of acolytes (including Attila Csihar, from Norway's black-metal linchpins Mayhem) with a pair of all-analogue albums engineered by Steve Albini, cut live to capture their feral energies on-stage. *Life Metal* came loaded with pre-composed riffs and breathily intoned poetry; 'shadow album' *Pyroclasts*, meanwhile, contained four of the 12-minute improv jams, with which they loosened up each morning at Albini's Electrical Audio.

Now semi-officially a trio, augmented by Dutch Moog maverick Tos Nieuwenhuizen, Sunn O))) duly toured transatlantically and, suitably road-hardened, entered BBC Maida Vale to record a radio session for Mary Ann Hobbs' show on Radio 6 Music. The resultant three tracks, extrapolated from this latest batch of material, make up *Metta, Benevolence*.

For two *Pyroclasts* pieces, Anderson, O'Malley, Nieuwenhuizen, plus touring members Tim Midyett and Steve Moore, are joined by Swedish singer-songwriter Anna von Hausswolff, who supported on the European leg.

On the original album, each warm-up jam was conducted in a different key; these are in another two again, F and C#. On Pyroclasts F, multiple droning synths underlie waves of six-string feedback as grittily textured as peanut butter, before, at around 6:00, von Hausswolff's wordless cries swoop between the layers, just two notes, up and down, adding brittle human urgency to the sonic tsunami.

Counter-intuitively, Pyroclasts C# opens with morning-bright synths, gradually acquiring churchy processional tones courtesy of pipe-organ virtuoso von Hausswolff, who, as guitar hum inexorably begins to intensify, at 7:30, whisperingly coos until the howl gently subsumes her – Sunn O))) at their most benignly meditative.

Best of all, though, a 32-minute reading of *Life Metal*'s Troubled Air doles out a mammoth chord change every 20 seconds, each a seismic event, some lumberingly inevitable, others tricksy and wrong-footing, others again presaged by pulse-racing amp howl, all ever-ascending like a Penrose staircase in sound. At 19:20, the climbing drones recede for a kind of *après*-apocalypse last post from Moore on trombone, until the journey beatifically ends in a sludge of imponderable depth.

Some say that Sunn O))) are a one-trick pony, but here are three contrasting sonic miracles, no less, from master sculptors of improvised noise.

Aeon Station

★★★

Observatory

SUB POP. CD/DL/LP

After two decades of silent intrigue, a solo outing from The Wrens' Kevin Whelan.

With 2003's expansive *The Meadowlands*, New Jersey alt-rockers The Wrens were poised for the kind of success soon nailed by their East Coast neighbours The War On Drugs, but there their progress regrettably stalled, amid contractual problems and a crisis of confidence. Ever painstaking creatively, they eventually mustered a follow-up in 2013, only for singer/guitarist Charles Bissell to halt release and spend another six years perfecting his contributions. Amid foreseeable tensions, bassist/songwriter Whelan has now split off with brother Greg (guitar) and Jerry MacDonald (drums) to ease his own compositional backlog on *Observatory*, its veritable rollercoaster of moods reflecting on the obvious frustrations, but also marriage, a short-lived relocation to Asia, and his autistic son. The highs of Fade, Queens and Better Love variously recall Arcade Fire and The Flaming Lips in euphoria mode, while the lows (Move; Hold On) plumb eerie depths akin to Big Star's *Third*. Alpine Drive closes, mercifully, with hard-won Christmassy joy.

Andrew Perry

Juçara Marçal

★★★★

Delta Estácio Blues

QTV SELO/MAIS UM. DL/LP

Postmodern samba blues from two thirds of Metá Metá.

Created piecemeal during the last four years, Juçara Marçal's latest solo album is a complex hybrid, blending hip-hop production techniques with maracatu, axé and candomblé, as well as dystopian post-punk. Created with fellow Metá Metá comrade Kiko Dinucci as co-producer, the album took Danny Brown's *Atrocity Exhibition* as a template, each embryonic song beginning with a disjointed rhythm then fielded out to prominent collaborators such as Rodrigo Campos, Siba and Tulipa for further composition. The result is a series of musical shocks driven by Marçal's powerful vocals: lead single Crash is a semi-rapped warrior's cry that references the graphic exploits of Kill Bill and Kung Fu; Sem Cais attacks climate change and the broader pollution of industry and political corruption; and the title track sees Robert Johnson learning his craft in Rio with samba pioneers instead of the Devil.

David Katz

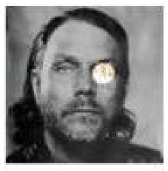
Simone Felice

★★★

All The Bright Coins

CHRYSALIS. CD/DL/LP

Former Felice Brother and Lumineers/Lana Del Rey producer resumes his solo career.



After 2018's *The Projector*, Simone Felice had been busy concentrating on his luminous production and songwriting work, until, inevitably, the day job beckoned once more. This means a succession of haunting story songs (not for nothing does Felice cite Harry Chapin as a touchstone), where Four Tet's Kieran Hebden guests and The Webb Sisters, late of Leonard Cohen, add ghostly backing vocals. No Tomorrows deals with his brain aneurysm, while Puppet echoes, of all things, Black Sabbath's Changes. Closing track After The Rain, meanwhile, is a hymnal balm. Less happily, he's made a part return to his original calling as a spoken word poet. So, the transcendent songs are entwined with spoken monologues augmented by intermittent backing and the sort of lyrical silliness that leads the track 90s to announce, "Byron and Keats were long gone, but we had Ghostface Killah and Neil Young". They'll probably work well live, though.

John Aizlewood

Keb' Mo'

★★★

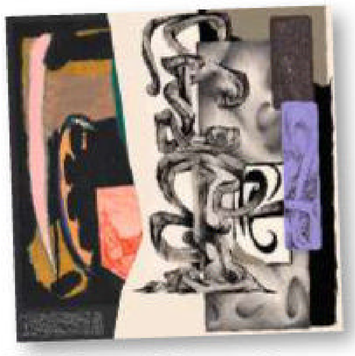
Good To Be

ROUNDER. CD/DL/LP

Compton-raised blues troubadour serves up his eighteenth album.

Now just turned 70, Mo' was born in Los Angeles but moved to Nashville a few years ago where he recorded much of this new album. Significantly, the influence of Music City is palpable on some of the tunes, three of which are produced by country doyen Vince Gill. The best of their collaborations is A Good Strong Woman, a slick slice of urban country pop with a sing-along chorus and soaring pedal steel guitar. Other highlights on this warm but ultimately ultra-safe record range from The Medicine Man, a jaunty bluegrass number, to the breezy drive-time anthem Sunny And Warm. Though the album's polished backdrops are a far cry from the raw Delta blues records that inspired Keb' Mo' at the dawn of his career, there's no doubting the authenticity of the deep feeling he pours into his vocal performances.

Charles Waring



Ill Considered

★★★★

Liminal Space

NEW SOIL. CD/DL/LP

UK improv band's stunning tenth album.

This London trio's extemporised gigs have become the stuff of legend, with fans including Brian Eno and David Holmes and nine albums self-released since 2017. Undoubtedly their best yet, *Liminal Space* has several guest contributors– including tuba player Theon Cross and percussionist Sarathy Korwar – and is characterised by a fuller, more layered production sound, but doesn't dilute the raw vascularity that defines their live performances. From start to finish, *Liminal Space* mesmerises; especially Loosed, where drummer Emre Ramazanoglu's remorseless polyrhythms lock with Liran Donin's seismic bass while Idris Rahman's tenor sax wails and roars. It's not all sound and fury, though, as the gorgeous Eastern-tinged Pearls illustrates with its sense of quiet stasis and repose.

Charles Waring

Kate Havnevik

★★★★

Lightship

CONTINENTICA. CD/DL/LP

Fourth album of glacial, skittish pop from Norwegian singer-songwriter.

Kate Havnevik has always been good at inventing intimate dreamscapes, though her last two albums (2011's *You* and 2015's *&i*) strayed a little into the more normal tropes of Netflix-drama style soundtracking. *Lightship* shows her returning to a more personal, experimental approach, with collaborator Guy Sigsworth (Björk, Madonna) enhancing and accentuating her choral delivery, quirky textures and shimmering, skittering melodies. Her voice drifts like an urgent whisper over warm cello and chiming handpan drums, or with bell-like clarity over driving percussion – Dream Her To Life, for instance, and Zamami, featuring Talvin Singh's busy electronic tabla, have a crackling, transformative power. She sings cryptic songs of love and hymns to the landscape, as if both communing with nature's sprites and coaxing out her artistic self.

Lucy O'Brien

Jana Horn

★★★★

Optimism

NO QUARTER. CD/DL/LP

Deceptively gentle songs of honesty, sensuality and longing from Texas singer-songwriter.

ORIGINALLY RECORDED in 2018, with members of Austin psych-country outfit Knife In The Water, Horn's debut now gets a fully deserved label release. Written "in a week out of the blue on my brother's couch in Austin", it is a seemingly effortless set of softly-sung poetic puzzles informed by the writings of Raymond Carver and the songs of Richard Thompson. As such, they unfold like melodic dreams, quiet epiphanies with religion, love, travelling, loneliness, TV-watching as their themes. If, as per the title, it's a record about optimism, it's an optimism of small stripe, wrung from "just moving through the world, hanging in the shadows of the people I wanted to be". Horn's voice feels both new and familiar, with something of Kim Deal's erotic pull and Sibylle Baier's ghostly melancholy. Similarly, her songs sound simultaneously safe and familiar, yet strange and unknowable.

Andrew Male

Hope against hope: Jana Horn, familiar yet unknowable.

Jacob Blickenstaff

Robin Guthrie: he knows exactly what he's doing.

Deeper and down

Instrumentals from former Cocteau Twin head for still waters. By **Victoria Segal.**

Robin Guthrie

★★★

Pearldiving

SOLEIL APRÈS MINUIT. CD/DL

"EVERYONE WHO listened to the Cocteau Twins would hear something else in their head or see different pictures or have their own interpretation," said Robin Guthrie in a 2006 interview, trying to explain the difference between his former band and their more literal songwriting contemporaries – "Morrissey droning away with some story," for example. Since the Cocteau Twins split in 1997, the guitarist has largely continued to resist the concrete world, his instrumental music opening up emotional spaces without putting in too many hard boundaries or supporting walls.

Pearldiving, Guthrie's first solo instrumental record since 2012's *Fortune*, was recorded in a time of deceptive stillness. There was no travel – previously a key inspiration for him – but there was still turbulence. In 1986, Guthrie – along with his then-bandmates Elizabeth Fraser and Simon Raymonde – united with composer Harold Budd on the beautiful *The Moon And The Melodies*. From 2005's soundtrack for Gregg Araki's disembodied drama Mysterious Skin, Guthrie and Budd became semi-regular collaborators. Their final project, *Another Flower*, was released in December 2020, just days before Budd's death from complications of Covid at the age of 84.

In response, Robin Guthrie felt the need to break down and rebuild his recording studio in Brittany before making *Pearldiving*. That reconstruction does not seem to have triggered any kind of cataclysmic rupture, however: this music – limpid, clean-edged, streamlined – feels more like a testament to core values, a test of the process to see what endures, what remains. Initially, it feels as if some of the grit in the shell has been filtered out, contemplative opener Ivy or Oceanaire's lazy calm a little diffuse and frondy, any tension present only in homeopathic quantities.

Yet beneath the appealing prettiness lies a slow-release drama, measured out with ink-dropper precision by a musician who knows exactly what he is doing. The beachy, sunset Ouestern has the slight uncanniness that comes with synthesized sound-stage landscapes, its orange glow not quite found in nature. The Amber Room and Euphemia's light piano, meanwhile, are buffeted by a low Vangelis undertow, like a feather over a vent. Those unseen forces move in tighter On The Trail Of Grace or Les Amourettes, falling away into ominous echo at the edges. Castaway, as close as the record comes to urgency, underlines this slightly precarious air, the sound of somebody moving forward, yes, but with eyes fixed on the path and not at the darkness off to the sides.

This is not new ground, but even if a master of atmosphere like Guthrie could do this in his sleep, it never feels as if he is. *Pearldiving* still tries to break the surface, make a ripple, cause a quiet stir, coming back up with handfuls of different pictures for whoever's listening.

Civic

★★★

Future Forecast

ATO. CD/DL/LP

Aussie garage rockers seek Stooges-via-Saints thrills.

Melbourne's Civic recorded their breakthrough EP – 2018's blistering New Vietnam – in a single day, and while this debut LP was partially recorded in a shed, *Future Forecast* gives their Ramones/Stooges/New York Dolls thrash an audible spit polish. Originally released In March via Flightless Records (previously home to Aussie breakthroughs Amyl & The Sniffers and King Gizzard And The Lizard Wizard), its crunching, gutter-glam guitars and street brawling rock'n'roll prowl largely around an intersection of *Raw Power* and the first three Saints LPs. The relentless riffolama is never short of thrills, but it lands best when the band stray into other territory: As Seen On TV's glorious knot of post-punk anxiety and powerpop choruses, or the gothic swirl of Sunday Best, where frontman Jim McCullough swaps his snarls and shouts for some malevolent, spoken-word drama.

Chris Catchpole

John Sebastian And Arlen Roth

★★★★

Explore The Spoonful Songbook

RENEW/BMG. CD/DL/LP

Lovin' Spoonful classics by the guy who wrote them.

The Lovin' Spoonful were one of the most commercially successful '60s rock bands and frontman John Sebastian in the highest tier of songwriters du jour, as well as a multi-instrumentalist and brilliant harmonica player. The band are often neglected in era histories, but this collection of his Spoonful songs should rectify that. With virtuosic guitarist Arlen Roth, the classics get rearranged, with other vocalists including peers Maria and Geoff Muldaur and Austria's MonaLisa Twins. Sebastian songs like Daydream, Do You Believe In Magic? and Nashville Cats are refreshingly optimistic – comfort food that couldn't be more welcome. Sebastian's voice is weathered, but it suits his bluesier side, the Twins are winningly upbeat and Roth is a jaw-dropping guitarist.

Outstanding music that functions as a high-dosage anti-depressant.

Michael Simmons

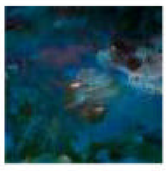
Oliver Earnest

★★★

The Water Goes The Other Way

GLITTERHOUSE. CD/DL/LP

Stuttgart songwriter's debut stresses the importance of being Earnest.



Oliver Hauber's middle name is Ernst, but he's calling himself Earnest because it's more "international" and he likes "the meaning of the word in regards to my songwriting." So, earnest by name and nature, with lyrics on the wry side of existential musing in a distinctly Americanised setting (he spent time in Colorado as a child). The National's epic brooding palate, with Matt Berringer's stately tenor, is a close comparison point: check Life Expectancy, where Earnest's measured delivery of, "My life expectancy either bores me to death or scares the shit out of me" errs on the side of faintly bored, though the music is passionate. He's more roused by Marble Stars' galloping riff, inspired by Arctic Monkeys and Modest Mouse, darkly intoning in Alex Turner fashion, "locked in an age of feeling… we're tea dreg children circling the drain."

Martin Aston

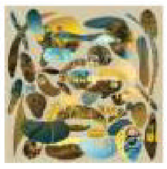
Pedro The Lion

★★★

Havasu

POLYVINYL/BIG SCARY MONSTERS. CD/DL/LP

David Bazan's return to his group name and his childhood haunts.



It's a terrific idea. Over five albums as the resurrected Pedro The Lion, David Bazan plans to return physically and musically to places he once lived. 2019's *Phoenix* dealt with his early years, before he moved cross-state to Havasu, a hillside community next to the imported London Bridge. Surprisingly heavy in the manner of a slower, more grinding Pearl Jam with an occasional electro backbeat, it finds Bazan discovering drums on First Drumkit – "I looked at my dad, he looked at me… he agreed to trade my clarinet for my first drum set" – and, in Teenage Sequencer, enjoying covert kissing by the school gym before volleyball ("turning me into a teenager"). The musical density doesn't quite complement the elegiac lyrical flow, and a change of pace might have meant another way forwards, but there's tenderness to spare.

John Aizlewood

Violette Guthrie

Aging ~ Land Trance

★★★★

Embassy Nocturnes

TOMBED VISIONS. DL/LP

MOJO Rising alumnus Andrew PM Hunt heads down noir mean streets.

Swift on the heels of his Dialect album, *Under~Between* (see MOJO's albums of 2021), Andrew Hunt is back with fellow Liverpool-based collaborator, Ex-Easter Island Head's Benjamin D. Duvall. As Land Trance the duo specialise in a charged psychedelic spiritualism, as evidenced on their mesmeric 2020 debut, *First Seance*. Recording with David McLean's Manchester-based jazz quintet Aging, in the basement of Liverpool's former Brazilian embassy, the pair have created a type of sepulchral noir score, smokey sax and forlorn trumpet imbued with a looking glass feel of inverted familiarity. Track titles such as Creeping Moonlight and Lights In The Driveway suggest Raymond Chandler by way of Thomas Ligotti, a dead genre reframed in the time slips and mythological spaces of post-Lynchian horror, the music's nocturnal stillness constantly beset by electro-acoustic patterns of sonic unease.

Andrew Male

Soundcarriers

★★★

Wilds

PHOSPHONIC. CD/DL/LP

Nottingham folk-popsters' fourth LP circumnavigates studio convention.

Twin penchants for rollicking Kraut grooves and '60s lounge pop (think New York-based vocal act The Free Design) governed these four Midlanders' early releases, but in the seven years since 2014's *Entropicalia*, they've discreetly moved on from linear motorik – after all, it's a particularly busy autobahn these days. Very patiently, the quartet evolved *Wilds*' more complex, tempo-variable songcraft at a series of non-studio environments, including a Peak District cottage, a Victorian primary school annexe, an art gallery (where they'd record by night and pack down their kit before morning opening) and a converted warehouse space. Consequently, the nine tracks sound pleasingly out of step with contemporary norms, like an after-the-fact imagining of late-'60s perfection, Leonore Wheatley's keening vocal melodies inviting obvious comparisons with space-poppers Broadcast, and a lysergic sonic zing recalling Scouse garage revisionists Clinic. Amid much rhythmic galloping and textural density (cue flutes, keys, kitchen sinks), the swishy West Coast psych pop simplicity of Saturate strikes the most satisfying chord.

Andrew Perry

The Whitmore Sisters

★★★★

Ghost Stories

COMPASS. CD/DL/LP

Eleanor and Bonnie Whitmore's sparkling hymns to absent friends.

Self-penned though most of these fine songs are (there's a lovely take on Macca's On The Wings Of A Nightingale, as sung by The Everly Brothers), *Ghost Stories*' tracklisting might have been cherry-picked by Alison Krauss and Robert Plant for one of their duets albums. Chris Masterson's production is pukka too, each classic country trope trimly understated. If Friends We Leave Behind is a suitably haunting standout on a work informed by the passing of ex-lovers and close friends including Bonnie Whitmore's ex-partner Justin Townes Earle, there's plenty for the juke joint jukebox too, not least Big Heart Sick Mind, two minutes and 34 seconds of precision-tooled, brilliantly-sung exuberance. The Whitmores' unconventional upbringing saw their pilot parents doing aerobatics to induce mum's labour with Eleanor and Bonnie; the sisters soar even higher here.

James McNair

The Whitmore Sisters: suitably haunting.

Immanuel Wilkins

★★★★

The 7th Hand

BLUE NOTE. CD/DL/LP

Alto saxophonist's second album continues his upward trajectory.

Even though his career is just taking off, 22-year-old Wilkins already looks set to join the small pantheon of great alto saxophonists that includes Charlie Parker, Cannonball Adderley, Eric Dolphy and Jackie McLean. The Pennsylvanian had the jazz critics drooling over his 2020 debut, the socio-political themed *Omega*, and now unveils its follow-up, an equally accomplished opus that features seven compositions delivered by Wilkins fronting an excellent quartet augmented by Elena Pinderhughes, who contributes slivers of sunlit flute to illuminate the otherwise portentous Witness. Though the music is often probing and cerebral – and one track, the febrile Lift, is fiercely avant-garde – there are moments of repose, epitomised by the beautiful ballad Fugitive Ritual, Selah. With its edge-of-the-seat improvisation and intrepid explorations, *The 7th Hand* embodies contemporary jazz at its most thrilling.

Charles Waring

Garcia Peoples

★★★★

Dodging Dues

NO QUARTER. CD/DL/LP

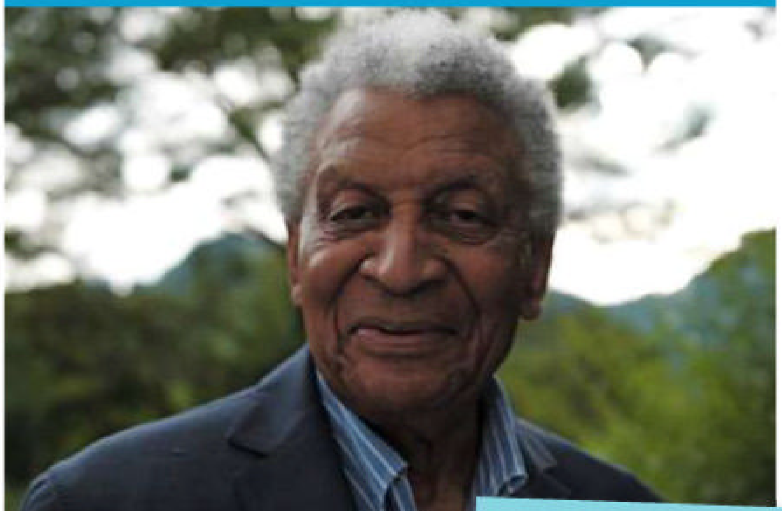
New Jersey jam band's fired-up response to the mess we're in.

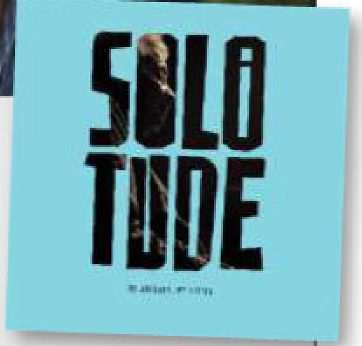
Having unleashed a 32-minute title track on 2019's *One Step Behind*, the following album *Nightcap At Wits' End* broke Garcia Peoples' acid boogie into 12 shorter songs. *Dodging Dues* is their shortest statement yet, offering seven songs in 34 minutes, with a stripped-down, countrified focus, their version perhaps of the Grateful Dead's *Workingman's Dead*/*American Beauty* phase. Indeed, Tough Freaks and Cold Dice could be Dead compositions from that time. A newly politicised anger to their lyrics also thrives. The album title comes from Tough Freaks ("Sick of dodging dues… Never in my life will I trust fools"), while there's a palpable tension to the hard rock frazzle of Stray Cats and Fill Your Cup. There is one longer song, Here We Are, eight wondrous minutes led by pedal steel that crystallises their will to fight on: "Crush defeat to dust… Will we make it past sundown."

Martin Aston

JAZZ

BY ANDY COWAN





Abdullah Ibrahim

★★★★

Solotude

GEARBOX. CD/DL/LP

Octogenarian South African pianist at the top of his game.

While there was no crowd to appreciate **Abdullah Ibrahim's** most recent birthday show at Germany's Hirzinger Hall, it matters not; the ex-Jazz Epistles piano maestro, warmly dubbed "South Africa's Mozart" by Nelson Mandela, used its acoustics to his advantage. His talent for playing older songs as if they had just sprung unbidden adds heartbroken heft to the Duke Ellington-influenced Sotho Blue and evergreen The Wedding, the latter sounding fresher than when it first surfaced on 1986's *Water From An Ancient Well*. Elsewhere, stately, contemplative new efforts In-Tempo and Once Upon A Midnight make light of his technical gifts with careful phrasing, sparing use of low pedals and feather-light dissonant touches. Dotted with unfussy miniatures (several below the minute mark), Ibrahim's gift for ghosting between guises and seamless transitions remains undimmed.

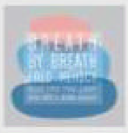
ALSO RELEASED

Fred Hersch

★★★★

Breath By Breath

PALMETTO. CD/DL



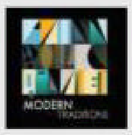
A bold new slant on the New Yorker's music, *Breath By Breath* pairs a rhythm section with a string quartet. Far from sounding bolted-on, the quartet swap guises at will across the eight-movement, meditation-minded Sati Suite, the pianist working in subtle harmonic substitutions and Monkish offbeat accents when least expected. For all the back and forth there's a lightness of touch, epitomised by closing Schumann homage Pastoral.

Brian Molley Quartet

★★★★

Modern Traditions

BGMM. CD/DL



One-time stalwart of early-noughties outfit Brass Jaw, Glasgow-based saxophonist Molley's warm lyrical tone and cultured interplay with pianist Tom Gibbs pays dividends across a carefully crafted album packed with hidden depths. Be it the swinging, wonky blues of Magic Ten, tender sweep of Lullaby-Bye or an unrushed jaunt through The Trolley Song (from Meet Me In St Louis), BMQ never waste a note.

Fazer

★★★

Plex

CITY SLANG. CD/DL/LP

These jazz graduates from Munich's Academy for Music and Theatre have turned into a tightly coiled, well-oiled machine. Their most sprightly affair by some distance, *Plex* gets off to a flyer with the upbeat two-step groove of Cuentro. Elsewhere, their dual drummers' polyrhythmic flurries carve out a safe space for guitarist Paul Brändle and trumpeter Matthias Lindermayr to show off their subtle but resonant chops.

Monodrama

★★★★

Mndrmooaa

EVERLASTING. CD/DL/LP

Madrid trio Monodrama continue to defy easy pigeonholing on an enigmatic third album deeply attuned to the night. Slow-building emissions A Blue Flame, Hobo and Sarabande conceal a wealth of sonic strangeness beneath the pulse of Alberto Brenes' brushed drums and Mauricio Gómez's lyrical tenor sax as keyboardist David Sancho toys with noise and distortion. A slowcore, post-rock take on nu-jazz for fans of Cinematic Orchestra or BADBADNOTGOOD. *AC*

FILTER ALBUMS EXTRA

THE WORLD TO COME

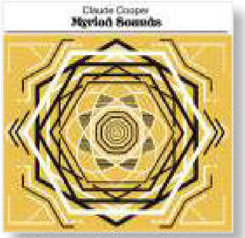
Daniel Blumberg

★★★

The World To Come

MUTE. CD/DL/LP

Soundtrack to Mona Fastvold's story of love amid tough rural landscapes (starring The Crown's Vanessa Kirby as Tallie) has similar mood contrasts. Princess Margaret would surely dig Peter Brötzmann's robust, 14-minute improvised clarinet workout for Tallie's Theme. *JB*



Claude Cooper

★★★★

Myriad Sounds

FRIENDLY. DL/LP

Bristol's beat scene backdrops elusive producer's late-night jams. Building on the twangy double bass momentum of single Tangerine Dreams, wild saxes and flutes pitch dodgy '70s cop show themes across the wired jazz of Magic Circle and Mongoose. *AC*

DAWN AFTER DARK
NEW DAWN RISING

Dawn After Dark

★★★

New Dawn Rising

CHAPTER 22. CD/DL/LP

Opening statement of intent Maximum Overdrive ("Take me higher/Set my world on fire") nails this return to unreconstructed '80s rock, without breaking the lexicon. Thereon, the Cult-like riffs and big breakdowns keep coming. Not subtle, but effective. *JB*

NEAL FRANCIS IN PLAIN SIGHT

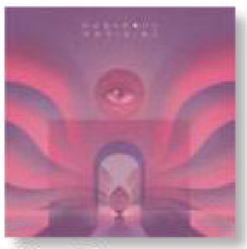
Neal Francis

★★★★

In Plain Sight

ATO. CD/DL/LP

Chicagoan singer-songwriter-pianist's second LP opens with a barrelling triad, including Derek Trucks-featuring single, Can't Stop The Rain. He digs deep (drink/love/God) on guileless rock and soul with bold flourishes, *à la* Lowell George or Randy Newman. *JB*



Go Dugong

★★★★

Meridies

HYPERJAZZ. CD/DL/LP

Cosmic multi-tasker Giulio Fonseca explores trad Apulian music on third LP. A driving pulse unites Randagio's deep folk trance and Tarantismo's lysergic energy, while Francesco Fratini's trumpet lights up La Montagna Sacra's unfolding ambience. *AC*

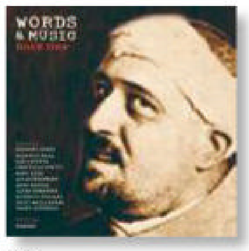
Shay Hazan

★★★★

Reclusive Rituals

BATOV RECORDS. DL/LP

Tel Aviv jazz bassist/composer Hazan mastered the hypnotic three-stringed guembri of Moroccan Gnawa fame for his own ancient-modern rituals. A slow trance of modal bass grooves, trumpet and drums, with a drag in the beat that's more hip-hop than jazz. *JB*



Kramer

★★★★

Words & Music, Book One

SHIMMY DISC. DL/LP

NY underground Zelig's emotive pairing of poetry with ambient backing. A funereal organ hovers overs Gregory Corso's Army; flute trails Allen Ginsberg around Père Lachaise for At Apollinaire's Grave. In all, eloquent and restrained. *JB*

THE MEMORY BAND
COLOURS

The Memory Band

★★★★

Colours

BANDCAMP. CD/DL/LP

Crafting left-field rusticity, Stephen Cracknell adds horns, bass and piano for warmth on The Sweet Primroses. There's an Axelrod-does-Brit-folk skitter to Albion's Daughter and flugelhorn showcase Curses. Joyfully odd. *JB*

Monsters
TRASH

The Monsters

★★★

You're Trash I'm Class

VOODOO RHYTHM. CD/DL/LP

In 35 years, The Monsters have lost none of their fury. This tangy riot of bludgeoned rhythm and aggressive rhymes finds the Swiss psychobilly masters' careening garage chaos capped off by unexpected harpsichord elegy Dead (Mortem Batkovic). *AC*

Nell & The Flaming Lips

★★★

Where The Viaduct Looms

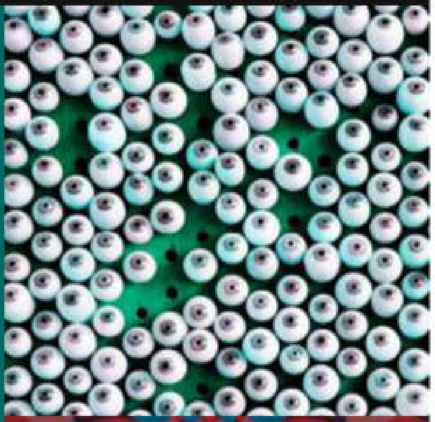
BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

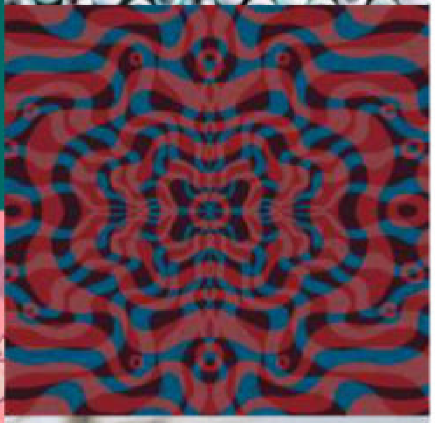
US teen Nell Smith's glassy sweetness is a great fit for the Lips on a Nick Cave covers LP. The more gothic the song (Girl In Amber; Red Right Hand) the better the interpretation. *JB*

EXTENDED PLAY

Bandcamp finds

In December 2019, Australian experimental guitarist and drummer Oren Ambarchi performed his 2016 album *Hubris* with a 14-strong band at London's Café Oto. With seven guitarists, three drummers, German electronic coordinator Jörg Hiller, Eiko Ishibashi on flute, Mats Gustafsson on shrieking baritone sax and a long-distance Jim O'Rourke on guitar synth, Ambarchi created an ever-ascending groove of celestial motorik funk now available on Bandcamp as *Live Hubris*. You'll need to calm down after that, so we recommend the appropriately named Eiderdown Records, a Seattle-based label specialising in contemplative acoustic psych-drone from artists such as Prana Crafter and UK guitarist Nick Jonah Davis. If those purchases leave you out of pocket, head over to deathisnot.bandcamp.com where Luke Owen's ethnographic label are offering everything from Jamaican doo-wop to North Carolina mountain singing for a "pay what you want" special deal. *AM*





Prana Crafter

spell songs

Various

★★★★

Spell Songs II: Let The Light In

THIRTY TIGERS. CD/DL/LP

Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris's second book of nature poems (barn owls, brambles, moths and swallows) soundtracked by a starry folk cast: includes Karine Polwart, Kris Drever and Seckou Keita's pure-toned kora. *JB*

WHITE STAR BULB COMPANY
HOME

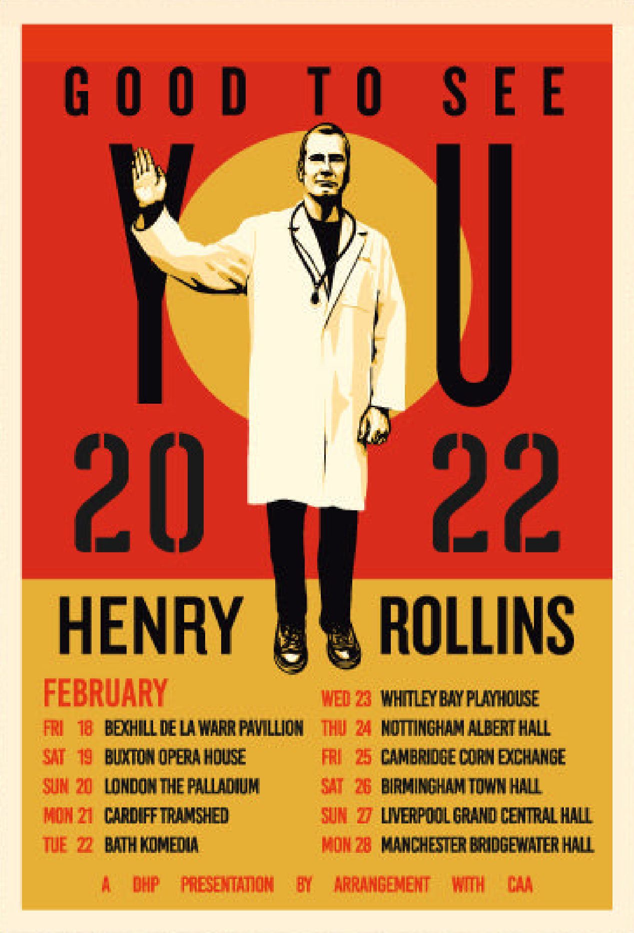
White Star Bulb Company

★★★★

Home

PRODUCT. CD/DL

Suffolk-based singer/multi-instrumentalist Ecki's fourth revisits early songs. Be it Lost's lovelorn despair or The Thackeray Roll's folked-up frolics, his moody blues variously evoke John Martyn, Eels and Tim Buckley. *AC*



GOOD TO SEE YOU 2022

HENRY ROLLINS

FEBRUARY

FRI 18 BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILLION
SAT 19 BUXTON OPERA HOUSE
SUN 20 LONDON THE PALLADIUM
MON 21 CARDIFF TRAMSHED
TUE 22 BATH KOMEDIA
WED 23 WHITLEY BAY PLAYHOUSE
THU 24 NOTTINGHAM ALBERT HALL
FRI 25 CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
SAT 26 BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL
SUN 27 LIVERPOOL GRAND CENTRAL HALL
MON 28 MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL

A DHP PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH CAA

KRIS BARRAS BAND

Uk Tour
MARCH 2022

SPECIAL GUESTS
FLORENCE BLACK (ALL EXCEPT CARDIFF)
TRIBELESS (CARDIFF ONLY)

08 MAR - EXETER - PHOENIX
09 MAR - EXETER - PHOENIX
11 MAR - CARDIFF - TRAMSHED
12 MAR - NOTTINGHAM - ROCK CITY
13 MAR - WOLVERHAMPTON - KK'S STEEL MILL
14 MAR - BRISTOL - THE MARBLE FACTORY
16 MAR - MANCHESTER - ACADEMY 2
17 MAR - LIVERPOOL - HANGAR 34
18 MAR - GLASGOW - ST LUKE'S
19 MAR - ABERDEEN - LEMON TREE
21 MAR - NEWCASTLE - BOILER SHOP
22 MAR - SHEFFIELD - LEADMILL
23 MAR - NORWICH - WATERFRONT
25 MAR - SOUTHAMPTON - THE BROOK
26 MAR - LONDON - ELECTRIC BALLROOM

THE NEW ALBUM 'DEATH VALLEY PARADISE' OUT 4TH MAR 22

SAMANTHA FISH

2022 TOUR

30.01 KOMEDIA BATH
31.01 QUEENS HALL EDINBURGH
01.02 WYLAM BREWERY NEWCASTLE
03.02 O_2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE LONDON
04.02 ACADEMY 2 MANCHESTER
05.02 ROCK CITY NOTTINGHAM
06.02 TRAMSHED CARDIFF
07.02 CHALK BRIGHTON
08.02 KK STEEL MILL WOLVERHAMPTON

PLUS SUPPORT
WILLE & THE BANDITS

NEW ALBUM FASTER OUT NOW
SAMANTHAFISH.COM

AN EVENING WITH

PETER HOOK & THE LIGHT

JOY DIVISION : A CELEBRATION

PERFORMING THE ALBUMS
UNKNOWN PLEASURES & CLOSER
PLUS AN OPENING SET
OF NEW ORDER MATERIAL

O2 APOLLO MANCHESTER
FRIDAY 14TH JANUARY 2022
O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON
FRIDAY 15TH JANUARY 2022
ROCK CITY NOTTINGHAM
SATURDAY 16TH APRIL 2022
MARBLE FACTORY BRISTOL
MONDAY 18TH APRIL 2022

BUZZCOCKS

UK TOUR MARCH 2022
02 **Bristol** Thekla
03 **Brighton** Concorde 2
04 **London** The Garage
05 **Oxford** O_2 Academy 2
09 **Preston** The Ferret
10 **Newcastle** The Cluny
11 **Manchester** Academy 3
12 **Nottingham** Rescue Rooms
17 **Sheffield** O_2 Academy 2
18 **Kendal** Brewery Arts Centre
SOLD OUT **nburgh** Voodoo Rooms
20 **Glasgow** Oran Mor
23 **Exeter** Phoenix
24 **Cardiff** The Globe
25 **Hertford** Corn Exchange
26 **Birmingham** O_2 Institute 2

CHUCK RAGAN

EUROPE/UK 2022

UK TOUR 2022
26 APR **Brighton Komedia**
27 APR **London Islington Assembly Hall**
28 APR **Leeds Brudenell Social Club**
30 APR **Bristol Thekla**
01 MAY **Manchester Gorilla**
CHUCKRAGANMUSIC.COM

SORROWS AWAY Spring 2022

THE UNTHANKS

THE-UNTHANKS.COM

13/04 **LINCOLN,** DRILL HALL
14/04 **NORWICH,** THE HALLS
15/04 **NOTTINGHAM,** ALBERT HALL
16/04 **LIVERPOOL,** PHILHARMONIC HALL
17/04 **POOLE,** THE LIGHTHOUSE
19/04 **BATH,** THE FORUM
20/04 **EXETER,** CORN EXCHANGE
21/04 **NORTHAMPTON,** ROYAL
22/04 **MIDDLESBROUGH,** TOWN HALL
23/04 **LANCASTER,** THE DUKES
24/04 **NEWCASTLE,** TYNE THEATRE
20/05 **NEW MILLS,** ART THEATRE
21/05 **MANCHESTER,** RNCM
22/05 **EDINBURGH,** THE QUEENS HALL
24/05 **BELFAST,** CENTRAL CHURCH
25/05 **DUBLIN,** VICAR STREET
26/05 **PONTARDAWE,** ARTS CENTRE
27/05 **BIRMINGHAM,** TOWN HALL
28/05 **BEXHILL,** DE LA WARR PAVILION
29/05 **LONDON,** PALLADIUM
31/05 **YORK,** THE BARBICAN

BOB MOULD
DISTORTION AND BLUE HEARTS!
SOLO ELECTRIC

FRIDAY 28TH JANUARY 2022
Bristol Thekla
SATURDAY 29TH JANUARY 2022
Nottingham Rescue Rooms
TUESDAY 8TH FEBRUARY 2022
London Islington Assembly Hall

DAVE HAUSE
AND THE MERMAID
BLOOD HARMONY TOUR
WITH MERCY UNION

UK TOUR FEBRUARY 2022
15 NOTTINGHAM RESCUE ROOMS
17 MANCHESTER GORILLA
18 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY 2
19 LONDON ISLINGTON ASSEMBLY HALL
20 BRISTOL THEKLA

Russellmania

The musical archive of the late Iowa-born cellist and electronic composer is now available in the UK and Europe. **Andrew Male** lends an ear to the first batch of four.

Arthur Russell

AUDIKA/ROUGH TRADE. CD/DL/LP

CHANCES ARE, if you are a fan of Arthur Russell in 2021 it's largely down to the work of Steve Knutson and Audika Records. The custodian of Russell's musical archive and estate since 2004, over the past 17 years Audika have reissued such original and hard-to-find LPs as 1986's minimalist voice-and-cello masterpiece *World Of Echo* and the block-chord minimalism of 1983's *Tower Of Meaning*, alongside game-changing archive collections such as the agitated pulse-pop poems of *Calling Out Of Context*, the unguarded country-folk of *Love Is Overtaking Me* and the graceful, melancholy home demos of 2019's *Iowa Dream*. In the process, the range, context and significance of Russell's genius has expanded from left-field, New York-based avant-garde club innovator to 20th century musical polymath, who has influenced everyone from Frank Ocean to Floating Points and, in the process, changed the face of 21st century music.

However, and it's a significant however, hard copies of Audika's US releases have rarely been locatable or affordable in the UK, so it's only right and proper that it's through Rough Trade, who originally released *World Of Echo* in 1986, that these records will now be more accessible. The only solo vocal LP released under his own name in his own lifetime, it's fair to say that, 35 years on, *World Of Echo* (★★★★★) still stands as Russell's masterpiece.

> **"A musical polymath who has changed the face of music."**

As with all of Russell's vocal works it is emotionally rooted in his childhood, growing up in the corn belt town of Oskaloosa, Iowa. Playing piano at six, cello soon afterwards, Russell was a child prodigy who soon drifted into teenage aimlessness. Arrested for vagrancy in San Francisco, he was released to the custody of a local Buddhist commune where he played cello for fire-walking ceremonies and joined the commune's country band(!) before studying minimal composition at the San Francisco Conservatory Of Music. Recorded in 1984, 10 years into his career as a club music innovator with outfits such as Dinosaur L, Loose Joints and Indian Ocean, and later described by Russell himself as an exercise in "vivid rhythmic reality", *World Of Echo* paints the picture of a solitary soul caught between past and present, love and loneliness, the warm sedative blanket of decaying cello rhythms and the cave reverb of his own voice simultaneously seductive and haunting. The words, chosen more for sound than meaning, and often accompanied by jags of cello feedback, reveal that resonant Arthur Russell melancholy, the eternal farm kid realising he is alone in the New York night, and that "the centre's worse, too/And the answer is/It's all/Ending/Darkness."

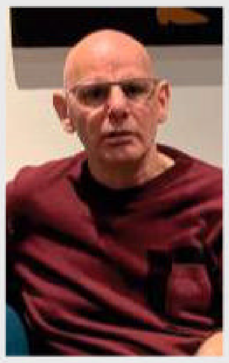
World Of Echo was released in 1986. In 1987, Russell was diagnosed HIV-positive. He continued recording, playing gigs, building a studio in his apartment, and working on a handful of album projects right up to his death in 1992. One project, another collection of voice-and-cello songs for Philip Glass's Point Music, appeared in revised form as the posthumous *Another Thought* in 1994, while material intended for Rough Trade and a more autobiographical work called *Corn* was then brought together on the seismic *Calling Out Of Context* (★★★★★) in 2004.

A celebration of Russell's late-period club minimalism, the audible influences of rap, electro, acid house and post-punk made strange, *Calling Out Of Context* takes *World Of Echo*'s forlorn, floating soul and the fluid euphoria of Russell's slender voice and drives it forward with skeletal dance rhythms, electro bleeps and run-out-groove feedback. Along with Soul Jazz Records' 2004 compilation, *The World Of Arthur Russell*, it re-contextualised Russell for a new generation of DIY bedroom musicians; this cross-sectional polymath became their new patron saint.

It's this audience, and not the one of his peers, that embraced Audika's 2008 release, *Love Is Overtaking Me*. A collection of folk, pop and country songs recorded between 1973 and 1990 that revealed Russell at his most tender and autobiographical, his unguarded narrative style, wry poetic profundity and quiet melodicism anticipating the music of Bill Callahan and The Magnetic Fields. That album shifted perceptions of Russell once again, so that by 2019's *Iowa Dream* (★★★★) Russell was, as Lucy Schiller states in her linernotes, an artist "something close to the mainstream…"

Focused on tracks from the start of Russell's career, including home recordings, lost songs and major label try-outs for Mercury's Paul Nelson and John Hammond at Columbia, these raw, intimate demos (restored by American musician Peter Broderick) can be disarmingly honest (I Wish I Had A Brother) and goofily romantic (I Still Love You) but best demonstrate Russell's Buddhist belief that the universal can be located in the prosaic. Here are transcendental bubblegum pop songs about sitting on sidewalks, going to school, or watching a film with an ending "that just felt tacked on" (You Did It Yourself). Russell once described bubblegum pop as "the notion of pure sound [as] a reality", and that's perhaps the best way to understand what he was searching for during a painfully short 20-year period of creativity: different ways to locate an unadulterated, absolute state through music; the Buddhist ideal. As such, it's instructive to compare *Iowa Dream* to the double LP *Instrumentals* (★★★★★), composed around the same time.

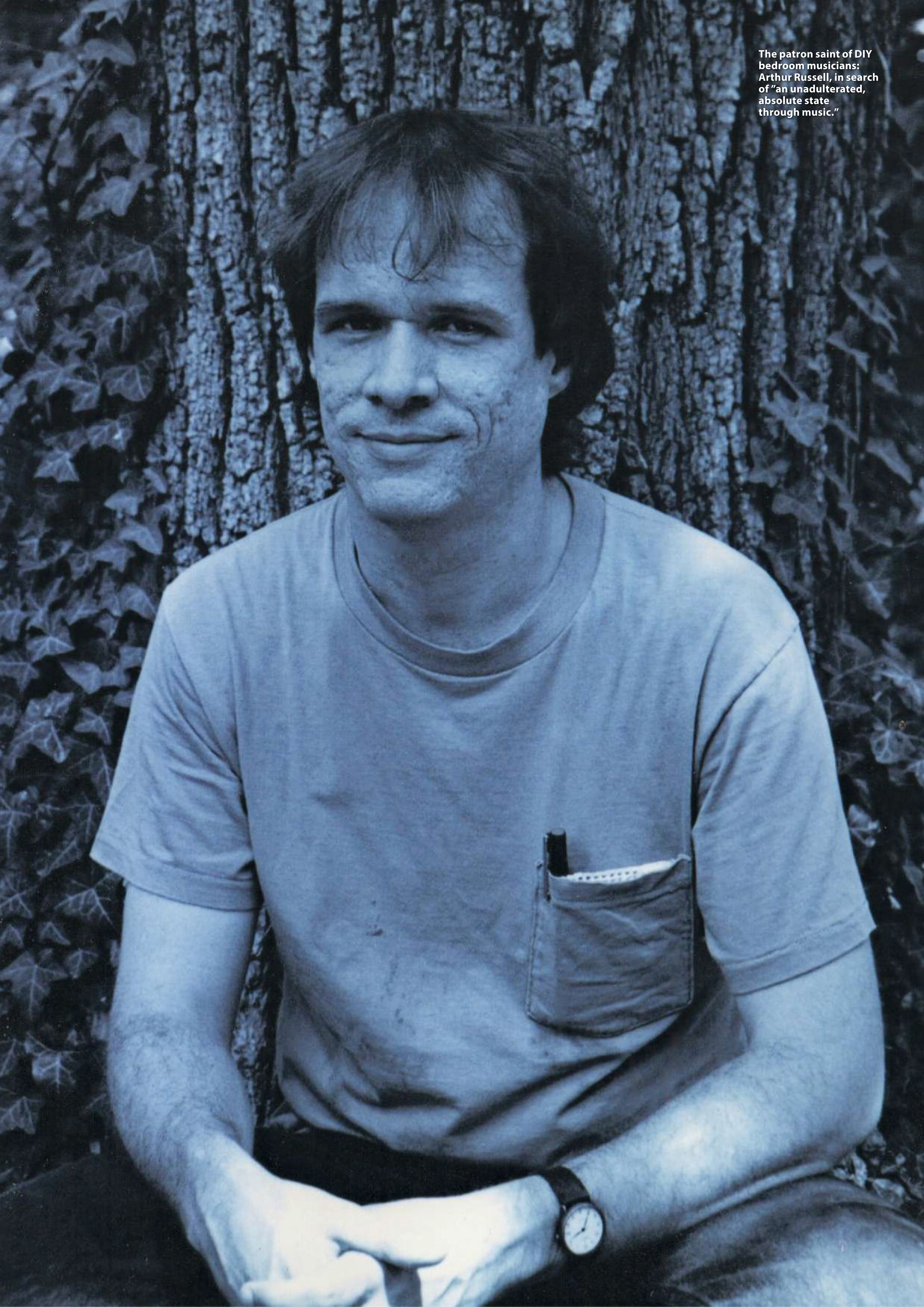
Designed to accompany a slide show by his Buddhist teacher Yuko Nonomura and recorded live in New York and Berkeley in 1975, with a downtown NYC supergroup comprised of Ernie Brooks, Julius Eastman, Rhys Chatham and Peter Gordon, these melodically exquisite, rhythmically complex "songs without words" at first seem attuned to the avant-garde world of Robert Ashley and Robert Wilson, and creative forbears such as Charles Ives. However, it now becomes apparent that the works were of a piece with the songs on *Iowa Dream*, another attempt by a different route to harness "the notion of pure sound as a reality". It is a mark of Russell's genius that he could locate this in both '60s bubblegum pop and '70s New York minimalism. It is thanks to the archive work of Steve Knutson and Audika Records that we can now hear that as well.



Chuck Russell, courtesy of Audika Records

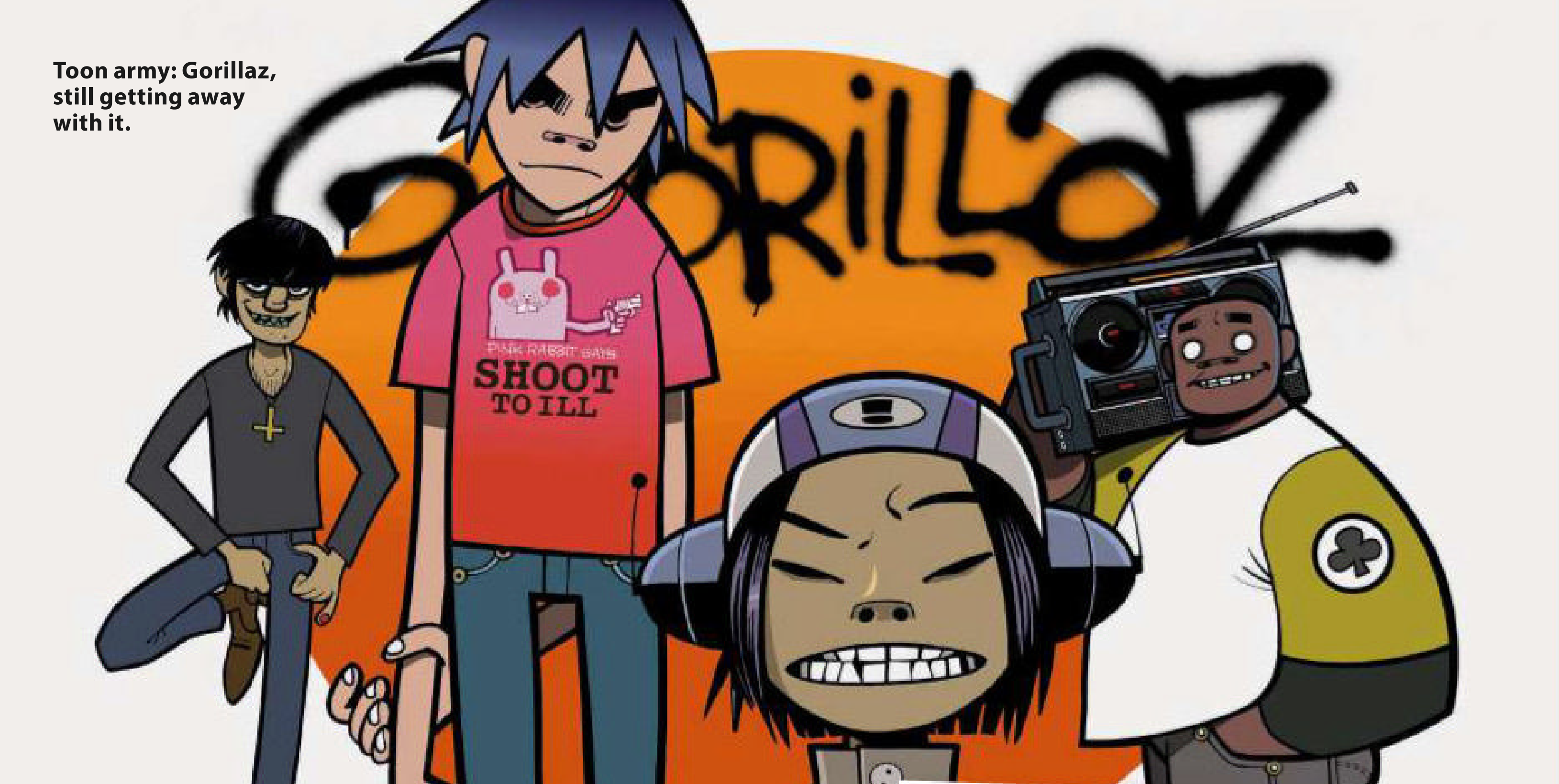
BACK STORY: ARTHURIAN LEGEND, BY GEOFF TRAVIS

● "Arthur always wanted to be popular, he was not satisfied being a cult musician. The fact that he made dance records under the Dinosaur L moniker [and] the dance label, Sleeping Bag he started with Will Socolov, is evidence of that. We would always discuss remix ideas which could help to catapult Arthur's music into the mainstream. I always thought that anything was possible. Arthur never really became popular in the sense he meant, but perhaps something even more valuable has happened: he has become a legend and a hugely influential sound wizard. He would have been happy to know how much his work has been enjoyed, listened to and even revered since his death."



The patron saint of DIY bedroom musicians: Arthur Russell, in search of "an unadulterated, absolute state through music."

Toon army: Gorillaz, still getting away with it.



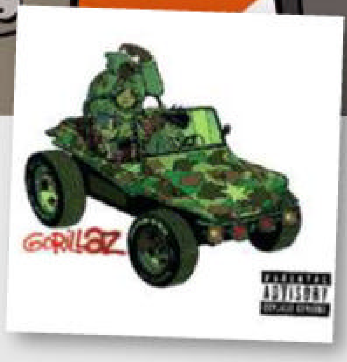
Gorillaz

★★★★

Gorillaz

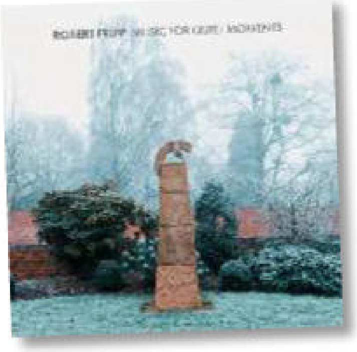
PARLOPHONE. LP

20th-anniversary super deluxe edition – now a four-hour feast.



For all the suggestion that a virtual band smacked of sixth formers messing about, Gorillaz found Damon Albarn finally achieving the sustained American success which had always eluded Blur. In 2001, the Gorillaz' debut established a template they have followed for the rest of their career: eclectic rhythms incorporating whatever took Albarn's fancy, from Latin to ska, via reggae, rock and soca, held together by conventional pop-electro. Underpinned by Albarn's musical rigour, it worked surprisingly well. All these years later, it still does and Re-Hash, Clint Eastwood and 19-2000 have retained their boundary-pushing allure. This expanded version lasts for four hours. In addition to the originals, there's the B-sides collection *G-Sides*, the hypnotic dub album *Laika Come Home*, a 2001 concert from London's Forum and, tagged on at the end, five "demoz". There's an air of celebration about it all, as if Gorillaz can't believe how good they were and how they got away with being cartoons.

John Aizlewood



Robert Fripp

★★★★

Music For Quiet Moments

PANEGYRIC. CD

King Crimson guitarist's ambience in an 8-CD box.

During 2020, amid the weekly menu of Robert & Toyah's Sunday Lunch podcasts, Fripp offered the rather more digestible alternative of a download of one of his "soundscapes", recorded live between 2004 and 2009, in a year-long series. And now, all 52 are compiled here. Fripp's use of digital delays gives his treated guitar notes a rhythmic rise and fall, like breathing, and he uses this system to create slowly shifting, layered patterns. He occasionally cuts out of the process, playing some sweet, spangly lead lines, or underpins it with ominous low notes. This all tends towards a broad similarity, with the only dynamics emanating from the occasional eccentric loop. Given the quantity of soundscapes albums already available, one wonders who actually needs all this. But taken on its own terms, this is sensuous, immersive music that soothes and tweaks the imagination.

Mike Barnes

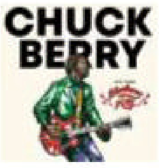
Chuck Berry

★★★

Live From Blueberry Hill

DUALTONE. CD/DL/LP

Previously unreleased souvenir of Chuck's decades-long run of hometown gigs.



In 1997, Chuck Berry began an epic series of 209 consecutive monthly shows at the intimate St Louis club venue Blueberry Hill. This album is drawn from various 2005 and 2006 performances undertaken as he was approaching his 80th birthday, and in contrast to the one-off pick-up bands he used when touring, at Blueberry Hill Chuck was always backed by his regular team of musicians. Understandably, he doesn't play so much lead guitar here as in earlier years, with many solos taken on piano by his long-time boogie sideman Robert Lohr, and some versions might leave you wanting to play the original Chess cuts instead. There is, however, a very nice laid-back reworking of Sweet Little Sixteen, and when Chuck cuts loose on Carol/Little Queenie or the fine closing Johnny B Goode, the magic is very definitely still there.

Max Décharné

The Waller Creek Boys Featuring Janis Joplin

★★★★

The Waller Creek Boys Featuring Janis Joplin

LYSERGIC SOUND DISTRIBUTORS. LP

Blues and folk from a pre-fame Janis.

The Waller Creek Boys
Janis Joplin

Before she became the flamboyant Queen Of Rock, Janis Joplin was a Bessie Smith-influenced blues singer in the Austin, Texas folk scene. These rare 1962 tracks (including five never-before released) feature her with The Waller Creek Boys: Lanny Wiggins on guitar and Powell St John on harmonica. The material is mostly standard for the folk era: blues (St James Infirmary; Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out), traditionals (Banks Of The Ohio), jug band (Stealin') and country (Silver Threads And Golden Needles). But when she covers the Ray Charles hit I'll Drown In My Own Tears, you can hear she's seeking to bust out of the folkie repertoire. The 19-year-old Janis's voice is already fully formed with extraordinary confidence and authority. Her deep soul and glass-breaking pierce are all here: the sound of a giant-in-training.

Michael Simmons

Majid Soula

★★★

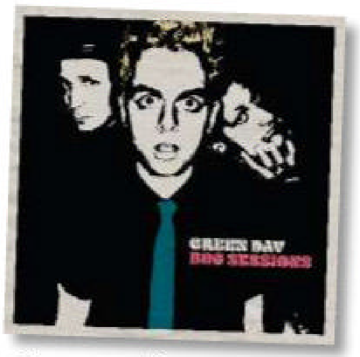
Chant Amazigh

HABIBI FUNK. CD/DL/LP

Collection of Algerian DIY artist's '80s work: he knows how to get under your skin.

It starts inauspiciously – Algerie Maroc is a none-more-early-'80s production with no great rhythm or melody – and you would be excused for wondering if the world needs a prestige compilation of Soula's music, originally released 40 years ago and only on short-run own-label cassettes in France. But Habibi Funk don't often put a foot wrong, and very quickly the mood shifts and we are transported to the mountainous Kabylia region of northern Algeria, where Soula has tapped into a delirious brand of Arabic house – fast, repetitive and insistent, impossible to date – that suggests he was ahead of the curve for a good part of his career. If the hipsters' adoption of Syria's Omar Souleyman left a slightly sour taste in your mouth, rest assured that *Chant Amazigh* will have you wanting more before the final fade-out.

David Hutcheon



Green Day

★★★★

BBC Sessions

REPRISE. CD/DL/LP

Oakland punks raid their Beeb archives.

Compiled from four BBC Maida Vale sessions between 1994 and 2001, this live set captures quite a journey; charting a course from the moment Green Day transcended the underground with their diamond-selling album *Dookie*, through to their pre-*American Idiot* commercial nadir. What quickly becomes apparent is just how commanding and worthy of revisitation these performances are. The crunching one-two of Brain Stew/Jaded sounds more muscular than 1995's studio incarnations, while 2001's session presents a band with melodic nous intact even when mainstream affection was waning. A reminder that Green Day's songwriting is far more nuanced than they're often given credit for.

George Garner

Claudia Thompson

★★★★

Goodbye To Love

SUNDAZED/MODERN HARMONIC. CD/DL/LP

A 60-year-old mystery is solved, a '50s singer reborn.

In 1956 Edison International released an LP of torch songs by Claudia Thompson. Although the sleeve listed the impressive line-up of musicians (guitarist Barney Kessel, saxophonist Benny Carter), it conveyed no information about Ms Thompson herself, save for the moody cover portrait of a young white woman staring out to sea. The album was reissued by Sundazed in 2016, and then in 2018 a set of alternative cover-shoot negatives were found in a thrift store, showing a different woman staring out to sea. Then an original copy turned up with an autographed photo inside, revealing that the real Claudia Thompson was a woman of colour. Now reissued without the whitewashed LP cover, it's a bittersweet experience to listen to Thompson's soulful tones and imagine the real emotions and the forgotten life that lies behind those melancholy ballads.

Andrew Male

Beirut

★★★

Artifacts

POMPEII. CD/DL/LP

Zach Condon digs deep for a fresh take on his Beirut past.

Artifacts begins with Elephant Gun, the lead track from a 2007 Beirut EP. It helped set the scene for what would become a trademark yet idiosyncratic style: Jacques Brel, klezmer, Weimar-era cabaret, fado, Scott Walker, Tom Waits, Caetano Veloso – all bleed through into the work of Beirut linchpin Zach Condon. Twenty-six tracks later, *Artifacts* ends with Babylon, a hypnotic, previously unheard instrumental positing the union of Ryuichi Sakamoto and Tindersticks. While not a best-of, this is the aural equivalent of emptying out a huge sock drawer where B-sides and tracks from EPs are teamed with unreleased material. There's no claim to be an album-like listen – Condon's linernotes are a great read – but what's here coheres and Condon and his collaborators only ever sound like Beirut. A reminder that what's beneath the surface can fascinate as much as what's plainly seen.

Kieron Tyler

Doug Carn

★★★★

Adam's Apple

REAL GONE. CD/LP

Uplifting cache of '70s spiritual jazz revived.

First released in 1974, this was cult keyboardist Carn's fourth and final LP for pianist Gene Russell's short-lived Oakland label Black Jazz. Now remastered, *Adam's Apple* finds Florida-born Carn building on the sanctified vibe of his previous Black Jazz outings but adding a funkier and more soulful quotient to the mix thanks to vocalists Joyce Greene and John Conner. Tenor saxophonist Ronnie Laws also guests, his smoking horn lighting up the swirling, gospel-funk of Higher Ground. In between potent original material, Carn refashions Earth, Wind & Fire's '74 hit Mighty Mighty into a propulsive slice of finger-clicking jazz swing and offers a mind-bending vocal adaptation of Sanctuary, the classic Wayne Shorter tune from Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew* album.

Charles Waring

The Dream Syndicate

★★★★

What Can I Say? No Regrets… Out Of The Grey + Live, Demos & Outtakes

FIRE. CD/DL

1986 studio LP, previously unheard live performance, demos and more.

Some early fans had distanced themselves from The Dream Syndicate by 1986's *Out Of The Grey*. The band had a different line-up, after retiring briefly, and were embracing a more commercially savvy sound utilising a typically '80s clean guitar tone. Yet Steve Wynn's writing was still deliciously on point: songs such as the title track and Slide Away, intoxicating jumbles of fierce intensity, energy and country-tinged melody. Reissued for the first time on CD in 24 years, it's bolstered here with two discs of previously unreleased extras: a storming July '85 live show at New York's Scorgies, delivering tracks that made it onto the aforesaid album in a wilder, rawer form, plus demos and outtakes – the latter including a run-through of The Munsters Theme Song.

Lois Wilson

Renaissance

★★★

Scheherazade & Other Stories

ESOTERIC. CD

Expanded version of folk-classical troupe's most acclaimed album.

By 1975 and Renaissance's sixth album, all their founder members – including ex-Yardbirds core Keith Relf and Jim McCarty – had gone, and their original blueprint of folk stretched by classical progressions had been refined and beautified. Comprising just four tracks across 46 minutes, *Scheherazade* aims for the epic, ebbing and flowing through vocal – Annie Haslam recalls a flightier Maddy Prior – and instrumental parts; John Tout's piano stands alongside Genesis' Tony Banks (both bands briefly shared producer David Hitchcock) in flourishes that don't topple over into showing off. It culminates in the nine-part, 25-minute title track, based on Middle Eastern folk tales One Thousand And One Nights (and not Rimsky-Korsakov's symphony), but it's less peak convoluted prog than full-flowing AOR. The bonus live disc includes the full Scheherazade, but there is little to choose between both versions.

Martin Aston

Band of brothers: (from left) Levon Helm, Richard Manuel, Robbie Robertson, Rick Danko, Garth Hudson.

Barrie Wentzell

I shall be re-released

The Band's underrated fourth album gets a new lease of life on its 50th birthday. By **David Fricke**.

The Band

★★★★

Cahoots: 50th Anniversary Edition

CAPITOL/UME. CD/DL/LP

BY THEIR own accounts, The Band were dazed, depleted, and drowning in excess when they recorded their fourth album, 1971's *Cahoots*. In his 1993 memoir, drummer Levon Helm claimed the LP was made "during the summer" of that year; the group was "a little bit rusty"; and the music "didn't prove to be that memorable." In his 2016 book, Testimony, guitarist-songwriter Robbie Robertson actually recalled "heavy snow" on the day that pianist Richard Manuel and Woodstock neighbour Van Morrison cut their booze-fuelled duet 4% Pantomime, named after the different alcohol levels in Johnnie Walker whiskies. As they left the studio, Manuel was so drunk he almost ran over Morrison with his car.

Whatever the season, The Band – the most acclaimed group of 1968 after a decade in the trenches behind Ronnie Hawkins and Bob Dylan; the leading edge of a rock'n'roll storytelling steeped in the roots and parable of pioneer experience – were hardly the fraternal ideal in this album's title, from a line in the bar-gig torpedo Smoke Signal. After three straight aces – *Music From Big Pink*, *The Band* and *Stage Fright* – Robertson's writing had given way to a litany of loss and surrealist resignation, a "tinge of extinction" as Jon Landau then called it in Rolling Stone. In the downbeat stroll Where Do We Go From Here?, bassist Rick Danko sang the chorus with plaintive candour ("I asked my woman… She said 'nowhere'"), joined by Helm in keening harmony. The slippery nature of success loomed large in Last Of The Blacksmiths, Manuel's bass-range piano thunder underscoring the final verdict in his high, wracked tenor: "Found guilty said the judge/For not being in demand."

This 50th-anniversary edition affirms the underrated triumph in *Cahoots* – a gripping portrait of long-haul road dogs struggling with adulthood and the steep price of recklessness – while the highs are as good as anything on the first three albums. Life Is A Carnival remains a jubilant entrance, propelled by Allen Toussaint's fleet of street-parade horns. Helm carries Dylan's contribution When I Paint My Masterpiece in a no-surrender sandpaper howl buoyed by Garth Hudson's cantina-rapture accordion. The Moon Struck One, meanwhile, in its grace and tragedy, is Robertson's greatest ballad, sung by Manuel with breathtaking heartache.

The primary extra (amid a few outtakes and live ruckus from Paris in '71) is a new mix by Bob Clearmountain that makes striking changes in the clarity and movement of parts. At one point in The Moon Struck One, the music under Manuel is reduced to a stark march of church organ and rhythm, heightening a sorrow already there in spades. It's risky business, messing with original text. But for *Cahoots*, so misunderstood for so long, it feels like another lease on life.

The Band
Cahoots

Bloomin' marvellous: the "fascinating" Blossom Toes (clockwise from top left) Brian Godding, Brian Belshaw, Kevin Westlake and Jim Cregan.

FILE UNDER...

Beware of the frozen dog

Clean on record, dirty live, Blossom Toes struggled to find their true place. By **Jim Irvin**.

HERE'S ONE for the compilers of the Only Connect wall: Scarlet, Wellington, Bartholomew and Plod.

Not Wombles or Trumpton firemen but, supposedly, the nicknames of Brian, Brian, Jim and Kevin, the four members of Blossom Toes whose highly-prized, 1967 pop-psych debut, *We Are Ever So Clean* ★★★★ (Cherry Red), featured this fascinating information on the back sleeve.

In the late Malcolm Dome's notes for this bumper 3-CD reissue, however, the band throw shade on these nicknames. "I know I was Little Brian, because Brian Belshaw was bigger than me," says singer and chief writer Brian Godding. "As for the rest, I couldn't even begin to guess who came up with that. We had no clue it had been done until we saw the album sleeve."

"It was all part of the way Giorgio saw us," adds guitarist Jim Cregan, later of Family, Cockney Rebel and Rod Stewart. "He believed we should be a cross between The Beatles and The Monkees. That's why there were the cartoons of us on the cover, and that's where the idea for those crazy names came from."

That was Giorgio Gomelsky, manager of The Yardbirds, who were Blossom Toes' heroes back when they were a jobbing R&B band called The Ingoes. Gomelsky – an imposing, charismatic Russian who wore sunglasses indoors and out – had dismissed them at first, but took these well-spoken north London boys more seriously after they'd secured a gig backing Sonny Boy Williamson on tour in 1965, signing them to management. Two years later, launching the Marmalade label, he invited The Ingoes to cut something. But their sound, and their name, needed modernising. So Blossom Toes was created to Gomelsky's specifications: he chose the name, produced the album using additional session players and David Whitaker's orchestral arrangements, and suggested the gimmicky pre-song skits. Cut in the spring of 1967, and released in November, it received enthusiastic but often confused reviews. Melody Maker's, for example: "Brilliantly produced… and the boys are all young, nice and creative. But it's all a trifle tedious."

The Goonish aspect felt forced, but the craziness was genuine enough. The band were keen consumers of LSD and had been writing under the influence, as The Remarkable Saga Of The Frozen Dog suggests and Cregan confirms. Their songs, like the noisy Taxman-in-a-hall-of-mirrors opener Look At Me I'm You, could be rowdy, mini-rock-operas, mellow orch-pop serenades like Love Is, or Kinksy whimsy like People Of The Royal Parks and When The Alarm Clock Rings. Cregan regrets including The Intrepid Balloonist's Handbook, Volume One, partly written, he says, as revenge for the arranger turning his tune into a polka.

Their antic, speedy album must have baffled people who bought it after witnessing jam-heavy live shows like the one captured in Stockholm that year on Disc 2. "Hashish to hashish, dust to dust," coos Godding introducing a fractious 10-minute tilt at Frozen Dog. Lo-fi reproduction aside, this set suggests that if they'd cut their LP in this muscular style, pitched somewhere between *Safe As Milk* Beefheart, The Who and The Groundhogs – especially on the lengthy stomp through Smokestack Lightning – they'd be considered more important today. "There's a frozen dog in everybody trying to get out," notes Godding at one point during the hard-boiled chaos, and who are we to argue?

Disc 3's round up of scratchy demos, sessions and scraps is a fan-only job. But overall, this reissue portrays Blossom Toes as a fascinating, intelligent band straddling a particularly wide gulf between what they wanted to do and what they were able to do.

BLOSSOM TOES
we are ever so clean

"The Goonish aspect felt forced, but the craziness was genuine enough."

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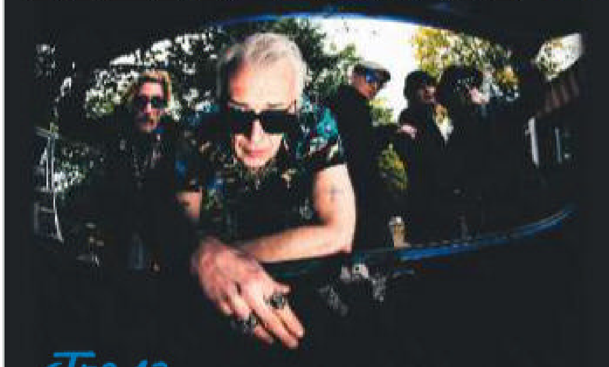

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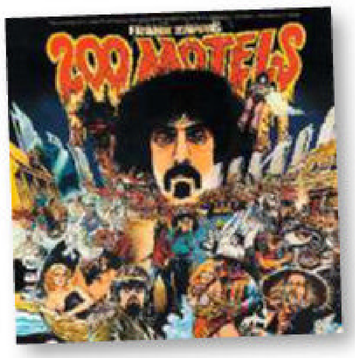


Frank Zappa

★★★

200 Motels

ZAPPA/UME. CD/DL/LP

One of FZ's most ambitious works is remastered, enhanced and augmented.

Frank Zappa's ambivalence to life as a touring musician was writ large on his surreal 1971 movie, 200 Motels. As well as creating a multi-faceted cinematic experience with famous pals (Ringo, Moony et al), Zappa also recorded an unfeasible amount of music for the accompanying soundtrack – pretty much all of which is included on the 173 tracks that make up the Super Deluxe edition of this package. It is a remarkable undertaking that stems back to the late composer's endless desire to beat the bootleggers (he created a live album series for that very purpose). It also provides a new perspective on Zappa's working methods at a point where he married the grandeur of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with the jazz-rock smarts and low-brow wit of The Mothers along with circus-ring dialogue. While *200 Motels* has tended to divide fan opinion down the years, those who buy the mega-box version will need at least a week to pick through an endless amount of out-takes and what is referred to as 'Bonus Swill' too. Exhaustive, indeed.

Phil Alexander

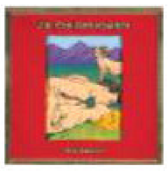
The New Pornographers

★★★★

Mass Romantic

MATADOR. LP

Murderously catchy Canadian powerpop debut turns 21. With bonus 7-inch.



Having advanced with Superconducter and Zumpano, Carl 'AC' Newman upped the ante with The New Pornographers, a septet of friends including fellow 'name' talents Neko Case and Dan 'Destroyer' Bejar, though The NPs were ostensibly a benevolent dictatorship. There is some common ground between them and The Shins, (check 2002 B-side The End Of Medicine, included here), full of short, sharp trickery (likewise, the lyrics), but Newman's Zombies/Beach Boys influences shine through, even when Case and Bejar's songs dilute the effect. *Mass Romantic* is a hyperventilating marvel, even when its energy levels threaten to overwhelm; it's clear from the Case-fronted gem, Letter From An Occupant, that there were seven members elbowing their way into the mix. It's surely only due to their divisive name that The NPs – now on their eighth album – have never achieved Shins levels of popularity.

Martin Aston

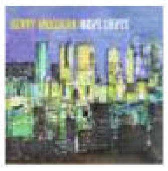
Gerry Mulligan

★★★★

Night Lights

NEW LAND. LP

Nocturnal-themed jazz classic sees daylight again.



Though he was born in New York, baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan became a leading light of the cool jazz scene that flourished on America's West Coast in the 1950s. Lighter and less intense than the East Coast's fiery hard bop aesthetic, California's cool sound was defined by an unhurried, languorous vibe that is epitomised by *Night Lights*, a Mulligan LP first issued on the Philips label in 1963. The saxophonist, whose horn is both breathy and resonant, leads a finely-tuned sextet that features the talents of trumpeter Art Farmer, guitarist Jim Hall and trombonist, Bob Blumenthal, who blend beautifully on a mixture of somnolent, crepuscular ballads and lulling bossa nova grooves. Sonically, the album sounds better than ever thanks to engineer Kevin Gray, whose mastering of the original tapes brings out every expressive nuance in the sextet's performances.

Charles Waring

Various

★★★★

Rocksteady People: JDI's Supreme 13 Hits

ROCKA SHACKA. CD/LP

Ultra-rare rocksteady, backed by renowned nightclub house band.

A hub of the Kingston entertainment scene since the 1950s, Johnson's Drive Inn hosted Teenage Dance Party, a weekly event showcasing Jamaica's pioneering ska producers. Then, in the mid-1960s, proprietor Copley Johnson launched the JDI label to issue singles by house band Los Caballeros Orchestra and leading vocalists Roy Panton and Desmond Tucker, as well as material by The Diamonds, a side-project led by saxophonist Karl 'Cannonball' Bryan. This intriguing comp gathers most of the JDI output, which gets its flavour from the prominent horn section that included saxophonist Sammy Ismay of The Dragonaires, and lounge music keyboardists Lloyd Delpratt and Freddie Butler. Panton's Beware Rudie and Tucker's Rude Boy's Prayer admonish the young perpetrators of wanton violence, Expo '67 is an emotive horns cut of The Rays' doo wop classic Silhouettes, and the title track salutes rocksteady's irresistible appeal.

David Katz

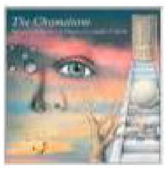
The Chameleons

★★★

Elevated Living

CHERRY RED. CD+DVD

Live box set celebrating Manchester's post-punk cult legends.



Drawing on Joy Division and U2 influences and adding twin-guitar frequencies of their own, The Chameleons' 1983 debut *Script Of The Bridge* remains a swarthy epic, fuelled by anger and paranoia, with two further, patchier albums attempting similar feats. Massive in Manchester, a cult in America, but unfashionable elsewhere, the quartet's impact was far-reaching, as acknowledged by The Stone Roses, Noel Gallagher and Interpol. Yet another posthumous live album to satiate fans, *Elevated Living* is their first box set, collecting three (and a bit) gigs (two making their debut on CD), and film footage, including a Portuguese TV rarity. The audio recordings are the soundtrack to the videos, so it all sounds a bit muddy, but hometown shows from The Gallery Club (1982) and The Haçienda (1983) capture their early spark, while 1984's London Camden Palace and 1986's Barcelona and Portuguese sets are The Chameleons on fire.

Martin Aston

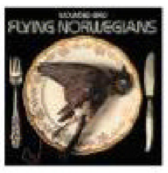
Flying Norwegians

★★★

Wounded Bird

APOLLON. CD/DL/LP

The return of Norway's country rock touchstone.



Despite its hideous dead-bird-on-a-plate cover image, Bergen's Flying Norwegians' second album *Wounded Bird* is a sought-after country rock winner. Their handle was borrowed from the Burritos, and genre templates define the 1976 release. Chris Hillman courses through Taste Of The Money and Let's Walk To The River is a bluegrass-based treat. Evening Prayer adroitly conjures CSNY. Although Norway's market for a home-grown Americana was small, the band found its niche as members were known from high-profile outfits Oriental Sunshine and Saft. But when Flying Norwegians supported Ozark Mountain Daredevils in Norway in 1976, the visitors poached guitarist Rune Wall. Three days later he was in America, leaving Flying Norwegians without their linchpin. *Wounded Bird*'s welcome reissue is accompanied by the return of the less-assured debut album *New Day*. Each comes with a disappointingly brief liner note.

Kieron Tyler

Bill Fay

★★★★

Still Some Light Part 1

DEAD OCEANS. DL/LP

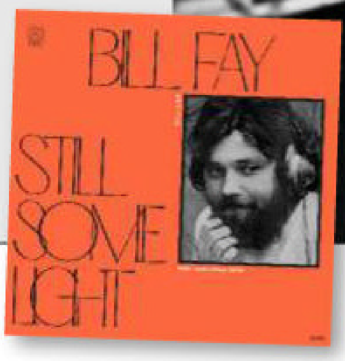
Reissued demos from 1970-1971 shine on.

First released on CD in 2010, these demos were part of Bill Fay's slow-accelerating rediscovery nearly 40 years after his music industry "deletion" and two years before *Life Is People* heralded his recording comeback. *Part 1* is reissued here on vinyl for the first time (*Part 2*, a set of songs from 2009, will follow; there are also accompanying 7-inch reworkings from Kevin Morby, Steve Gunn and more). Aside from piano parables Love Is The Tune and Arnold Is A Simple Man, these were tracks destined for 1970's *Bill Fay* and 1971's *Time Of The Last Persecution*, spiritually restive and alert to humanity's unhappy direction of travel. The cosmic lights-out of The Sun Is Bored pushes its anxiety into frantic guitar rather than the album's orchestral freakout; Release Is In The Eye and Tell It Like It Is vibrate with up-close urgency. Another side of a remarkable story.

Victoria Segal

Turn it on: Bill Fay seeking studio illumination.

Credit in here



Rauf Galip

The Pretty Things: sparking fireworks at the Beeb.

The last broadcast

Expanded radio and TV sessions bring the cult R&B heroes' story up to date.
By **Lois Wilson.**

The Pretty Things

★★★★

Live At The BBC

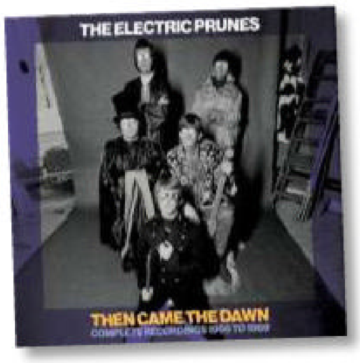
REPERTOIRE. CD/LP

WITH THEIR radical-for-the-times long hair and insurrection-invoking approach to performance, The Pretty Things were the band Andrew Loog Oldham made The Rolling Stones out to be. It's rumoured Mick Jagger wanted them banned from appearing on '60s TV show Ready Steady Go!, fearing they would steal the Stones' thunder. Guitarist Dick Taylor had of course played with Mick and Keith in an early incarnation of that group, but it was in '63 along with Phil May, a graphic design student at Sidcup Art College in south-east London who played a mean maraca, that he formed The Pretty Things and made sparks fly. Their live shows crackled with an electricity and raw, visceral intensity from the get-go. With the classic line-up completed by bassist John Stax, rhythm guitarist Brian Pendleton and drummer Viv Prince, a proto-Keith Moon in attitude and antics, by rights The Pretty Things should have burned out with the beat boom, such was their wild, youthful abandon. Instead, they presaged musical trends: after early blues and R&B experiments, they captured psychedelia's dawning on 1968's *SF Sorrow*, now widely acknowledged as the first rock opera. Via hard rock through the '70s, from the late '90s onwards they plied back-to-basics rock'n'roll, chiming with the 2000s garage revival. Their musical conviction was halted only by May's ill health in 2018. He sadly died in 2020 from complications following hip surgery after a cycling collision.

Live At The BBC tells The Pretty Things' story through radio and TV sessions. Greatly expanded from previous editions of the set, its 110 tracks spanning six discs begin in October '64 with five tracks from Saturday Club. "Watch out for fireworks," show host Brian Matthew announces as cymbals crash and clash and clang. Meanwhile, irreverent acts of homage to Bo Diddley and Jimmy Reed, plus a blistering rendition of their then current single Don't Bring Me Down, become articulations for adolescent sexual desire and a re-gendered aesthetic.

A newly unearthed, complete unabridged version of freakbeat classic Defecting Grey from '67 puts them on a par with The Beatles in terms of kaleidoscopic vision, while an elongated rendition of Cries From The Midnight Circus from 1970's Sounds Of The '70s demonstrates there was still plenty of roll to their rock, and even when the material dips (see this writer's particular bête noire, Singapore Silk Torpedo, from a 1974 John Peel Show), their delivery is always instinctive, never procedural. By 2018's tracks recorded for Marc Riley's BBC 6 Music show, the most recent session collected here, the group have come full circle, still in thrall to the Bo Diddley beat, and despite May and Taylor being in their seventies, still knocking it out the park.

THE
PRETTY THINGS
LIVE
AT
THE BBC



The Electric Prunes

★★★

Then Came The Dawn

CHERRY RED. CD/DL

From 1966 to '69, the LA outfit's strange journey from garage band glory to David Axelrod puppet.

The Electric Prunes were one of the greatest *Nuggets*-era combos with US hits I Had Too Much To Dream (Last Night), Get Me To The World On Time, their self-titled debut album and its follow-up, *Underground*, a glorious mesh of Stonesy rhythm and lysergic alchemy. *Stockholm '67*, a live set recorded during the same time, captures them raw and punky, while rarities on this 'complete recordings' set range from pop to snarl. By 1968's *Mass In F Minor* and *Release Of An Oath*, David Axelrod was at the helm; the former barely featured the group, the latter didn't at all. Nor did the disappointing boogie rock of *Just Good Old Rock And Roll*, their 1969 in-name-only swan song, recorded by a different group, The New Improved Electric Prunes.

Lois Wilson

Hasaan Ibn Ali

★★★★★

Retrospect In Retirement Of Delay: The Solo Recordings

OMNIVORE. CD/DL

A majestic but little-known jazz pianist flying solo.

Known in jazz circles for his mid-'60s work with drummer Max Roach, the late Hasaan Ibn Ali is one of the mightiest overlooked pianists. These 2-CDs of solo work are 2021's second collection of unreleased material, and it's astonishing. Like fellow Philly phenom John Coltrane, Ibn Ali blazes and splays forth sheets of sound. He shares virtuosity with Bud Powell (as well as classical pianist Glenn Gould) and eccentricity with Thelonious Monk, but he isn't mimicking anyone. These sides – a mixture of standards and originals – were recorded by friends in 1962-65. Within any given track, tempos vary wildly, and he sounds as if his fingers are going to fly off the keyboard. Yet he's never less than perfectly precise – the result is ineffably beautiful, controlled and utterly elegant chaos.

Michael Simmons

The Communards

★★★★

The Communards

LONDON. CD/DL/LP

Remix-laden 35th-anniversary edition of politico-pop landmark.

COMMUNARDS

According to Communards keyboard man Richard Coles, the duo "wanted to bring down Thatcher by doing cover versions of '70s disco classics and sort of supper club jazz music." One single from their debut, a euphoric Hi-NRG spin through Gamble & Huff's Don't Leave Me This Way, became 1986's biggest-selling single, skyrocketing (ex-Bronski Beat) singer Jimmy Somerville's profile, which he weaponised to campaign against Section 28's legalised homophobia. With Somerville also fully utilising his soaring falsetto, the "supper club" side was equally charged. Jazz standard Loverman sounds – in a good way – like Liza Minnelli drag, while Forbidden Love represents the come-down when all that euphoria has worn off. Of the three Don't Leave Me… mixes, the 11-minute Gotham City mix is closest to the sensation of Somerville heroes Sylvester and Patrick Cowley.

Martin Aston

Various

★★★

Tokyo Glow

WEWANTSOUNDS. DL/LP

Double-vinyl compilation of '80s city pop from the Nippon Columbia label.

If you're an aficionado of '80s Japanese city pop, then the last few years have served you well. First there was Light In The Attic's 2019 comp *Pacific Breeze*, which charted the evolution of '70s Japanese AOR into post-YMO city pop. Then came DJ Nick Luscombe's *Tokyo Dreaming* for Wewantsounds, which cherry-picked the finest J-pop and electro-funk from Nippon, Columbia's Better Days label. Now comes Wewantsounds' second volume, compiled by city pop connoisseur DJ Notoya. A deeper dive into more obscure pieces, but with a stronger emphasis on unashamedly sunshine grooves, this is a sound that, with its major debt to Chic, Odyssey, Level 42, US yacht rock and shopping mall muzak, is genre-curious in its sparkle and allure, and most certainly not for everyone.

Andrew Male

Various

★★★★

Beale Street Beats Volume One

BEAR FAMILY. LP

Snapshot of 1960-62 Home Of The Blues label located on Memphis' Beale Street.

Helmed by Ruben Cherry and his aunt Celia Camp, Home Of The Blues operated out of Cherry's record shop of the same name – regulars included Dewey Phillips, Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash, who named a song after it. Key to the label's house sound was local trumpeter and future Hi Records maestro Willie Mitchell, who not only produced the majority of the label's output but also released 45s on it, both with his doo-wop group The Four Kings and as an instrumental outfit under his own name. His swinging Thirty Five Thirty is included on this first of two 10-inch LPs which collates the label's rawer R&B sides: also present are Roy Brown's jumping Rocking All The Time, Billy Lee Riley's blistering Teenage Letter and The 5 Royales' storming Goofball.

Lois Wilson

Kelley Stoltz

★★★★

Antique Glow

THIRD MAN. DL/LP

Portastudio auteur's 2001 psych-pop jewel goes double for 20th anniversary.

The breakthrough second album by this Detroit-born, San Francisco-based one-man band (and sometime Echo & The Bunnymen auxiliary guitarist), *Antique Glow* revealed a savant's facility for assimilating core '60s texts – as equally au fait with Roky Erickson as Ray Davies – into his own distinct universe. And while no surprise to discover the prolific Stoltz left off as much as he put on, the quality of this expanded edition's 13 extra songs (all debuting on vinyl, with 10 unreleased on any format) is nonetheless astounding. The now double-LP's second disc opens with the chiming piano melancholy of Old Pictures, a Lennon-esque counterpart to the original album's Harrisonian sunrise Perpetual Night, then duly proceeds down a parallel path: gutbucket blues drollery (Harmonica Makes The Doggy Go Wild), ramshackle motorik groove (Discount City VU), psychotic garage stomp (You'll Find The Truth In A Frying Pan), heartsore Buckley balladeering (Umbrella), and the occasional slide into karaoke (Too Beck). A pocket symphony to cheer the soul, *Antique Glow*'s eternal virtues shine ever brighter.

Keith Cameron

Various

★★★★

Back Up: Mexican Tecno Pop 1980-1989

DARK ENTRIES. DL/LP

First vinyl compendium of Mexico's electronic pioneers.

Spanish lyrics make a clear demarcation between *Back Up*'s 10 contributors and their transatlantic counterparts, but other differences are harder to quantify. Potential contributory factors: the distance – physical and spiritual – between Latin America and the UK home of the new synthesized sound (Mexico's underground labelled it "The Cult With No Name") and a dearth of decent budgets and equipment, lending these tracks a raw, naïve energy. One upshot is the melodrama of the various singers (think Marc Almond), which adds another layer to the 'cold wave' atmosphere of analogue synths and drum machines. Spanning 10 years, *Back Up* covers almost as many styles: from synth-punk (Nahtabisk's La Dama De Probeta) to infectious pop (Vandana's Cambios En El Tiempo), from histrionic (Escuadrón Del Ritmo's Las Cucarachas, AKA The Cockroaches), to simmering Latino-funk (Volti's Corazón).

Martin Aston

COMING NEXT MONTH...

Hurray For The Riff Raff, Black Country, New Road, Imarhan, Big Thief (pictured), Jethro Tull, Michael Rother, Josephine Foster, Sparks, Cate Le Bon, Spiritualized, Mitski and more.

REISSUES EXTRA

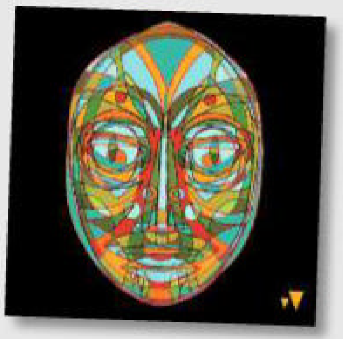
Air

★★★★

10,000 Hz Legend

RHINO. BR/CD

After *Moon Safari*'s space-age wine bar optimism, the French duo took a more composerly, darkly wistful turn. For its 20th anniversary, this heavily textured LP gets a full-spec Blu-ray remaster. Extras include glitchy ballad The Way You Look Tonight (from 2002's remix album *Everybody Hertz*), live tracks and demos. *JB*



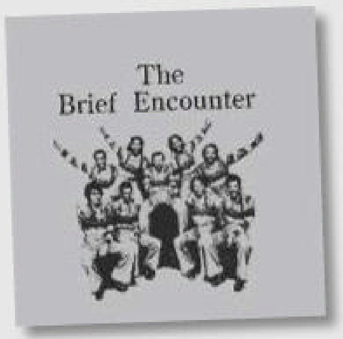
Bixiga 70

★★★★

Bixiga 70

GLITTERBEAT. LP

Tenth anniversary vinyl edition for the debut by São Paulo 10-piece who strove to emulate Fela's Africa 70 in both name and approach, assimilating hip-hop, jazz and reggae into Afro-Brazilian traditions. Brass-heavy but deeply percussive, highlights include the unexpectedly psychedelic Jamaican jam, Zambo Beat. *JB*



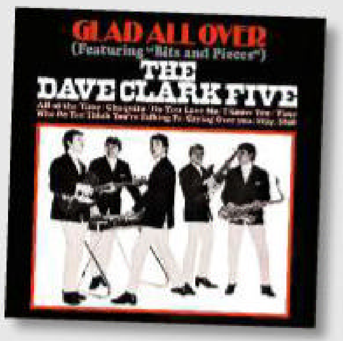
The Brief Encounter

★★★

Introducing The Brief Encounter

REAL GONE. LP

Super-rare 1977 R&B (original on Discogs: £1,343) by North Carolina outfit. "The baddest group of people you've ever seen" are more like a polite Isleys. Fine harmonies, best on their too-rare forays into earthier, Clinton-esque funk. *CP*



Dave Clark Five

★★★★

Glad All Over

BMG. LP

The DC5's 1964 US debut album, then released to capitalise on the success of its stomping title track, now remastered by DC and de-fluffed: throwaways like Doo Dah make way for stronger (Crying Over You; 3046) and tougher ('69's Who Do You Think You're Talking To) material. On white vinyl to match their pristine trousers. *JB*

Willie Hutch

★★★★

Soul Portrait

BE WITH RECORDS. LP

Future blaxploitation soundtracker first honed his craft at RCA. Produced by John Florez, 1969's *Soul Portrait* announced an artist already fully formed; his songcraft and arrangements concise, energetic, and bubbling with melody. See the uplifting, Curtis-like Ain't Gonna Stop; the slinky You Can't Miss Something That You Never Had. *LW*

Loney Hutchins

★★★

Buried Loot

APPALACHIAN RECORD CO. CD/DL

Subtitled "Demos From The House Of Cash And 'Outlaw' Era, '73-78", these 24 unreleased songs, demoed for a publishing deal with Johnny Cash's label, reveal a richly-voiced Nashville songwriter as at home inhabiting tender material (lovely Hazel Smith co-write Stoney Creek) as 'outlaw' songs (the cautionary tale of Pinball King). *CP*

Bertie Marshall

★★★

Exhibit

UPSET THE RHYTHM. DL/LP

Later a novelist, Marshall's roots were in punk's Bromley Contingent. His band Behaviour Red recorded one single, Ke Ke Ke Ke Ke Ya, picked up by both John Peel and a Dutch toothpaste ad. It's a blood-pumping, tribal-drumming highlight of this collection of post-punk, *sprechgesang* goth. *CP*

North Americans

★★★★

Going Steady

THIRD MAN. LP

After two electronic albums, LA's Patrick McDermott set about repurposing the opaque traditions of American Primitive guitar on NA's third, from 2018. Against a backdrop of delicate, glowing drone, guitar and pedal steel waltz and hum like a slow, metaphysical bloom. Vinyl extras include singles Gallup and Catch And Release. *JB*

Various

★★★★

Essiebons Special: 1973-1984

ANALOG AFRICA. CD/DL/LP

Subtitled "Ghana Music Power House", a fitting epitaph for Dick Essilfie-Bondzie, Ghanian highlife producer behind the Essiebons label's keyboard grooves. Six unreleased cuts, including Ernest Honny's fusion-ready Say The Truth. Highlight: the blissful whirl Yeaba by CK Mann's Carousel 7. *JB*

RATINGS & FORMATS

Your guide to the month's best music is now even more definitive with our handy format guide.

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★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★	★	☆
MOJO CLASSIC	EXCELLENT	GOOD	DISAPPOINTING	BEST AVOIDED	DEPLORABLE

Crikey, psyche!: The Open Mind in '69, (clockwise from left) Philip Fox, Timothy Du Feu, Terry Schindler and Mike Brancaccio.

Courtesy of Timothy Du Feu, originally published by It's Psychedelic Baby! Magazine

CREDITS

Tracks: Dear Louise/ Try Another Day/I Feel The Same Way Too/My Mind Cries/ Can't You See/Thor The Thunder God/ Horses And Chariots/ Before My Time/ Free As The Breeze/ Girl I'm So Alone/ Soul And My Will/ Falling Again

Personnel: Terry Schindler (as Terry Martin, guitar, vocals), Mike 'Bran' Brancaccio (lead guitar, piano), Timothy Du Feu (bass), Philip Fox (drums)

Producer: Johnny Franz

Release: 1969

Recorded: Philips Studio, London

Chart peak: n/a

Available: streaming services

Against the brain

This month's find in rock's sunken dreadnought: freakbeat psych for proto-metallers.

The Open Mind

The Open Mind

PHILIPS, 1969

BACK BEFORE online omni-accessibility, buyers of psychedelic esoterica started with *Nuggets* and worked their way down through the substrata of compilation albums. Certain recurring songs stood out on collections like *The Psychedelic Snarl*, *The British Psychedelic Trip Vol. 3* and *Nuggets II*. One such, sitting alongside selections by The Craig, Crocheted Doughnut Ring and Tinkerbells Fairydust, left a particularly sinister vapour trail: Magic Potion, a 1969 single by south London's The Open Mind.

An eerie invitation to trip hard, the song exists in several states at once, with a buttoned-up Mod appeal, psychedelic menace and distorted heavy metal guitars – a combination which can also be heard on the group's sole LP. "It's really not like pop and it wasn't jazz and it wasn't rock'n'roll," says vocalist/guitarist Terry Schindler today. "People say 'psychedelia', but I don't think we ever saw ourselves as psychedelic. People have called Magic Potion the first heavy metal track ever made… [but] it just had a totally accidental identity all of its own."

The group formed when Schindler joined members of Putney/Wandsworth rockers The Apaches and formed blues act The Drag Set in 1965. The group recorded with Joe Meek shortly before a murder/suicide ended the troubled production genius' life on February 3, 1967. Later that year, Day And Night, subsequently re-recorded as Girl I'm So Alone on *The Open Mind* LP, was released on 45. Yet, as new currents moved in rock, things soon took a different turn when the group's management was taken over by boxing promoter Benny Huntman and his son Roger.

"I remember going to [Roger's] house quite a bit, they were a little scary," says Schindler [Huntman Snr. was said to be an associate of the US mafia "accountant" Meyer Lansky; it was also alleged, by his own son, that he facilitated a 1965 gangland hit on former world light heavyweight boxing champion – and sometime Six-Five Special host – Freddie Mills]. "They tried to promote us as best they could, but they didn't really know the business and we were just young and having fun."

As the renamed Open Mind worked their day jobs and played the UFO Club, Middle Earth and the Marquee by night, their new handlers plotted their breakthrough. One managerial coup was for the band to have raunchy leather suits made by designer Alice Pollock. The Huntmans also got them a deal with Philips, and the group found an unexpected sponsor in house producer/A&R Johnny Franz, whose recent clients included Dusty Springfield and Scott Walker.

"Johnny Franz was producing Cleo Laine and Johnny Dankworth at the time," says Schindler. "So, I think it was a change for him which he really enjoyed. It was a very, very enjoyable process, kind of what everybody wants in a band."

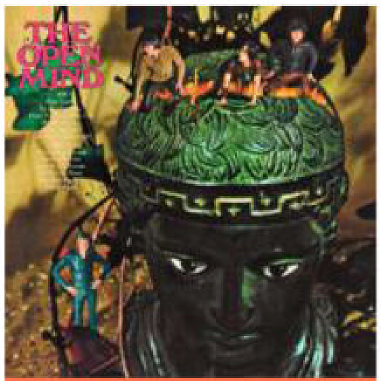
The band and Franz recorded at Philips' Stanhope Place studio. For the album, working-titled Gestation, Schindler recalls piecemeal sessions over a few weeks in October/November 1968. It wasn't without incident – Benny Huntman died halfway through the process, while Schindler was obliged to sing some of his vocals from a chair after twisting his ankle – but the results blended riffs, harmonies and ragas with a molten tar-pit heaviness. As on the scorched-retina My Mind Cries or the addled Horses And Chariots, these psychedelic nosedives sound neither blissful nor Technicolor: other elements suggested metal and prog styles to come – see the chrononaut viewing his own pregnant mother in Before My Time, or the Marvel comic-referencing Thor The Thunder God (actually about Schindler's extra-marital fling with a Swedish woman, he says). Throughout, Mike 'Bran' Brancaccio's serrated guitars and the Timothy Du Feu/Philip Fox rhythm section make for a habit-forming formula. "That double drum sound on the album was Johnny Franz's brainchild, and we loved that," says Schindler. "Mike's guitar sound was just something he did on his own – he was a very talented boy – and Johnny encouraged that too."

The album was duly released, with a somewhat literal image of the leather-clad band emerging from the lava-filled cracked head of ancient Greek statue The Charioteer of Delphi. After getting back in the van and playing the club circuit, in 1969 they returned to Stanhope Place to cut Magic Potion and its sympatico flipside, Cast A Spell, with producer Fritz Fryer. "Magic Potion was obviously a song about drugs and that's where it came from," says the singer. "Not that we were heavy users. We weren't really thinking that there would be any problem with it. John Peel really liked it, but I think the BBC said, 'No, it's about drugs so we can't play it,' which was a bit of a bummer."

The group's time was not long: one late-period incident involved them being filmed live in a church in Wandsworth as a condition of touring the Netherlands. "I think it ended up in some porn movie," says Schindler. "I never saw it." Within the year the group had split, with Schindler and Du Feu carrying on with unrecorded jazz rockers Armada, who split in 1972.

Schindler now works in clothing retail in Vancouver and remains in touch with Du Feu; Brancaccio passed away earlier this year. With assistance from his son and daughter, Schindler plans to record new material, including The Open Mind's Dear Louise (the name of his mother and granddaughter). "I'm very proud of Magic Potion," he concludes. "That is a stellar track. I find the interest in it totally bizarre, and it's not made me any money – but it feels really good!"

Ian Harrison



"The BBC said, 'It's about drugs, we can't play it.'"
TERRY SCHINDLER

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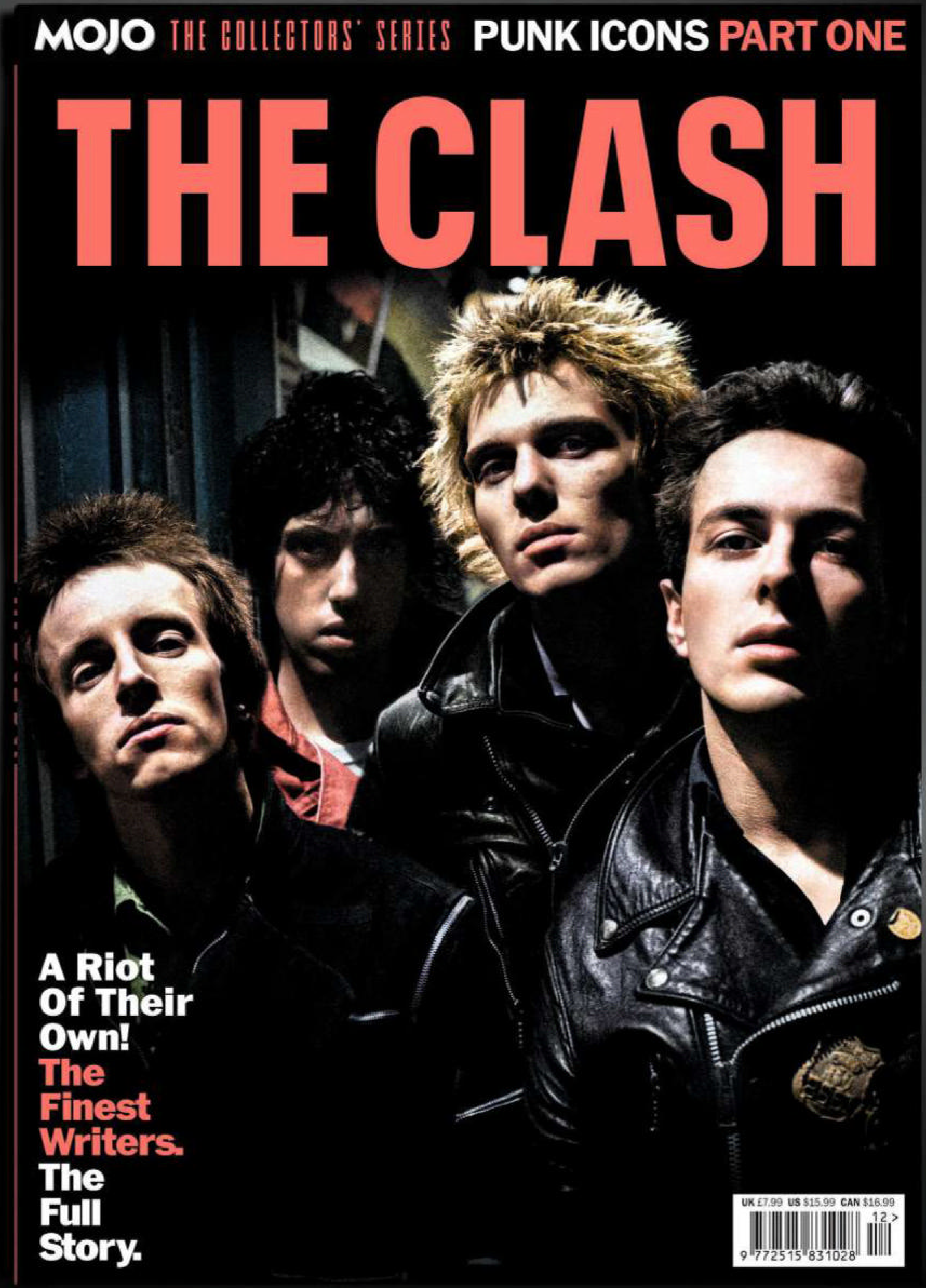

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"International disco band": Yellow Magic Orchestra (from left) Ryuichi Sakamoto, Yukihiro Takahashi, Haruomi Hosono in 1980.

Yellow Magic Orchestra and solo

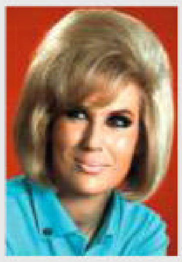
City pop picks. By **Andrew Male**.

IN 1973, Japanese folk rock group Happy End arrived at Los Angeles' Sunset Sound Studios asking to meet Van Dyke Parks. The group, Beach Boys obsessives thanks to the West Coast tastes of founder member Haruomi Hosono, had come seeking "that California Sound". Parks, then working on his baroque calypso travelogue *Discover America*, refused to help until he saw the group's suitcase full of money. The sessions were fractious, complete with a drunken argument about Pearl Harbour, and the resultant album was steeped in a languorous melancholy reflecting Hosono's disenchantment with both the Western perception of Japan and his own vision of America. The group split and Hosono realised a new sound was required.

His first option was to reappropriate the fake Asian exotica of Martin Denny, and make it sound authentically 'Japanese'. His next idea was for "an international disco band" – a Japanese product that could be successfully exported overseas. Recruited to help were classically trained session keyboardist Ryuichi Sakamoto and drummer Yukihiro Takahashi. Sakamoto, a former student of electronic music composition at the Tokyo National University of Fine Art, brought with him a deep love of German groups such as Kraftwerk and Neu!, bands who'd responded to the post-war Americanisation of their own culture by creating a new sound disconnected from that past. Takahashi, former drummer with UK-based Japanese art-proggers Sadistic Mika Band, had toured with Roxy Music and been friends with Malcolm McLaren, and was deep-schooled in art rock and pop disruption. Together, the trio attempted what Sakamoto called a "Bento box" fusion of all these influences and ideologies, combined with a sense of humour that bordered on self-parody, and knowledge of *Onmyōdō* (the 'yellow magic' of the band's name).

The project was successful. YMO's clean, crisp "techno pop" sound – simultaneously futuristic and retro, Western and Eastern, influenced US hip-hop, Detroit techno, UK synth-pop and, arguably, Kraftwerk themselves (hello, *Techno Pop*). More importantly, it allowed Japanese musicians to develop their own modern 'city pop' sound. The three members worked as producers, collaborators and effectively helped forge the cultural identity of '80s Japan, before splitting off into three wildly different directions. Out of over a hundred solo and band albums, here are 10 to start you off.

> "The three members effectively helped forge the cultural identity of '80s Japan."



CAST YOUR VOTES...

This month you chose your Top 10 Yellow Magic Orchestra & Solo LPs. Next month we want your Dusty Springfield Top 10. Send selections via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or e-mail to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Dusty Springfield'. We'll print the best comments.

AUDIO SPONGE SKETCH SHOW

10 Sketch Show
Audio Sponge

DAISYWORLD DISCS, 2002

You say: "Sakamoto's output is also voluminous… Sketch Show's *Audio Sponge* album is very good." Mixmaster Morris, via Twitter

Following an aborted YMO reunion at the start of the millennium (with Sakamoto too in demand as an international composer to find the time), Takahashi and Hosono recorded this exquisitely downbeat electronic tribute to their heroes. There are gorgeously introspective covers of such obscure '60s numbers as David Gilmour's Do You Want To Marry Me and The Cyrkle's Turn Down Day, while Beach Boys tribute Wilson sounds like a telephone exchange trying to recreate *Smile*. The beautiful Flying George hints at what the YMO reunion might have sounded like, while their cover of Max Steiner's Theme From A Summer Place brings things right back to Hosono's love for '50s US easy listening.

YELLOW MAGIC

4 Yellow Magic Orchestra
Yellow Magic Orchestra

ALFA, 1978

You say: "I listened to mainly German synthesizer music, then a friend pointed me to the Japanese 'Kraftwerk'…" Suppersreadygenesis, via Instagram

Following Sakamoto and Takahashi's collaboration with Hosono on 1978's playfully bizarre *Paraiso*, the group joined up with computer programmer Hideki Matsutake to create this genre-breaker. Defined by their cover of Martin Denny's Firecracker, which reworks Western concepts of 'Asian' music with Takahashi's hard R&B drum-kick and the beep and bloop of Japanese arcade games, this was exportable modern city exotica. Hip-hop crews dug the sound, while others referenced the sleeve's electronics inventory. Seek out the "heavier" US mix on A&M from 1979.

Paul Cox/LFI/Avalon, Alamy

9 Ryuichi Sakamoto

Async

MILAN, 2017

You say: "Could make a case for dozens of Ryuichi records, but I would make sure to include *Async*." @msclairebiddles, via Twitter

His first solo album in eight years, this quiet masterpiece was written while recovering from a 2015 diagnosis of throat cancer and was described by Sakamoto himself as "an imaginary soundtrack to an Andrei Tarkovsky film". Recorded in New York, and influenced by prime numbers, chaos and asynchrony, *Async* travels through prepared piano pieces to sweeping soundtrack romanticism, pop electronica, avant discord and minimalist digital decay. In many ways related to the highly recommended LPs of minimal electronica he's recorded with German musician Alva Noto and Austrian experimental guitarist Christian Fennesz, but far more profoundly moving.

8 Harry Hosono & The Yellow Magic Band

Paraiso

CBS/SONY, 1978

You say: "Haruomi Hosono's *Paraiso* (1978) works a charm for me." @TLRmakessound, via Twitter

Although it was an idea he'd hoped to develop with YMO, the first perfect realisation of Hosono's "Japanese exotica" is on this 1978 LP recorded with Takahashi and Sakamoto. Deeply indebted to '70s soft rock, it's also eerily prescient of late-noughties chillwave. Best experienced alongside Hosono's other LP from the same year, *Pacific*, in which city pop maven Tatsuro Yamashita and former Happy End guitarist Shigeru Suzuki collaborated on a defiantly lightweight mood album; Bob James shopping mall muzak as Fluxus art experiment. Also check out Happy End's 1973 collaboration with Van Dyke Parks and members of Little Feat.

7 Ryuichi Sakamoto

Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence

VIRGIN, 1983

You say: "One of the most beautiful pieces of instrumental music of all time." @kerryjeanlister, via Twitter

Released in the wake of Yellow Magic Orchestra's first break-up, Sakamoto's debut film score, for Nagisa Oshima's Japanese prisoner-of-war drama, is suitably melancholy, bittersweet and minimal, a collection of Oriental electronic tone poems sandwiched between two absolute masterpieces: the film's main theme and its gorgeous companion piece, Forbidden Colours, sung by Japan's David Sylvian. Sakamoto would go on to compose many other award-winning scores (The Last Emperor; The Sheltering Sky) but this is the one that feels closest to YMO's sonic aesthetic and Hosono's idea of an exportable national exotica.

6 Ryuichi Sakamoto

Hidari Ude No Yume

ALFA, 1981

You say: "Sakamoto said he wanted to fuse his spirit with that of a machine. This is where he achieves that." Lloyd Mahoney, via Facebook

It's certain this LP wouldn't have made the list if it hadn't been for Wewantsounds' amazing double-disc reissue in 2020. Initially a Japan-only release, this collaboration with King Crimson's Adrian Belew, M's Robin Scott, Stockhausen alumnus Robin Thompson, plus Takahashi and Hosono of YMO, is a rhythm-based exercise in cut-ups, collage and texture, much like David Byrne and Brian Eno's *My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts*. The melodies are light, the vocals endearingly naive but the instrumental base (as featured on the reissue's second disc) is astonishing, a blend of marimba, sho, hichiriki, and guitars with wailing no wave sax and dub rhythms.

5 Yukihiro Takahashi

Neuromantic

ALFA, 1981

You say: "I love Yukihiro Takahashi's *Neuromantic*. The sad, seen-it-all-before gent at the new wave disco." @southrecordshop, via Twitter

Recorded with Andy Mackay and Phil Manzanera, who Takahashi had befriended while touring in the UK with Sadistic Mika Band, this is an unabashed love letter to UK art rock and electronica. Hosono and Sakamoto both appear on keyboards and the album does have a similar mood to the 1981 YMO LP *BGM*, but *Neuromantic* is the one to plump for, an endearing collection of introspective pop songs that sounds like David Sylvian fronting a more experimental variant of *Manifesto*-era Roxy Music. Also, you could take a wild guess that Bowie heard this before working on *Let's Dance*.

3 Yellow Magic Orchestra

Solid State Survivor

ALFA, 1979

You say: "YMO's most solid album. The seeming contradiction of their deadpan goofiness resolves into a startling aesthetic vision." @vinylscrobbler, via Twitter

Soundtrack for a future Tokyo. Modern, clean, streamlined, aspirational, optimistic. The group's second album wasn't released in the UK until 1982 by which time it had already been strip-mined for influences. Listened to now it sounds more futuristic and inventive than ever, from its reworking of Japanese classical music on Absolute Ego Dance to the proto-Detroit beats of Rydeen, achieved by emulating the sounds of the charging horses in Kurosawa's Seven Samurai. Sakamoto's Behind The Mask was, of course, later covered by Michael Jackson. Other standouts include mournful Castalia and the Devo-weird cover of The Beatles' Day Tripper.

2 Ryuichi Sakamoto

B-2 Unit

ALFA, 1980

You say: "A left-field techno progenitor. And a pretty heavy guestlist: Dennis Bovell, Penguin Café Orchestra's Steve Nye, Andy Partridge…" @southrecordshop, via Twitter

Often cited alongside Manuel Göttsching's *E2-E4* as a key text in the (pre-) history of techno, Sakamoto's staggering act of Fairlight programming also suggests future directions of electronic sound that might now be recognised as Chicago footwork, Ze Records' 'mutant disco' and early Warp Records. The Dennis Bovell production and primitive rhythmic contributions from XTC's Andy Partridge reveal Sakamoto's love affair with post-punk, but there is also Fela Kuti's Afrobeat influence on Riot In Lagos, which astounded Hosono and brought a tension, distortion and dark energy to the next stage of YMO.

1 Yellow Magic Orchestra

Technodelic

ALFA, 1981

You say: "So innovative and uncompromising – weird but catchy and powerful." Paul Rymer, via Facebook

The band at its absolute peak. The trio have been listening to punk, new wave, hip-hop and synth-pop, and it shows in the more aggressive rhythms but also in their ironic emulation of David Sylvian's and John Foxx's vocals on the tracks such as Pure Jam and Stairs. It's a more alienated 'punk' groove but also a more charged and innovative one with YMO expertly employing loops, samples and complex beatbox rhythms. There is also more depth here, the dazzling surface sheen of earlier albums replaced by something more tarnished yet reflective. The black notes of disaffection may have been creeping in, but the result was this deeply haunting and introspective masterpiece.

NOW DIG THIS

With the success of *Solid State Survivor* (two million sales worldwide), YMO became huge in Japan and in demand as producers. That's another How To Buy entirely, but check out Wewantsounds' reissue of Akiko Yano's 1980 double LP *Gohan Ga Dekitayo* (Supper's Ready) in which "the Japanese Kate Bush" (and Sakamoto's then wife) is supported by YMO on four sides of vinyl that range from mournful ballads to proto-city pop fusion. Live YMO (with Yano as an extra live vocalist injecting a new wave B-52's energy into proceedings) is best experienced by watching 1979's fusion-heavy Live At The Greek Theatre (inset) on YouTube plus their Soul Train performance of Archie Bell's Tighten Up. The definitive YMO biography is still waiting to be written.

In large amounts: Dave Gahan feels the love as Depeche Mode bring music to the masses, 1988; (insets) scenes from the Pasadena Rose Bowl.

Behind the wheel

DM's dual narrative 1988 US tour doc: an unheralded classic, now digitally restored with extra live footage. By **Manish Agarwal**.

Depeche Mode 101

★★★★★

Dir: DA Pennebaker, Chris Hegedus & David Dawkins

MUTE FILM/SONY MUSIC. BR/DVD

WHEN THE veteran filmmaker DA Pennebaker died in 2019, obituaries invariably highlighted his landmark documentary Dont Look Back, in which the "pioneer of cinéma vérité" (New York Times) captured Bob Dylan in 1965. There were also rightful mentions for Monterey Pop, featuring Jimi Hendrix's flaming guitar, and concert film Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars, wherein David Bowie killed off his iconic glam persona.

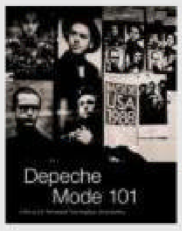
All of which is canonically understandable. But if you scroll through Pennebaker's filmography to the end of the 1980s you'll find another, less widely discussed profile of musicians at work which, from a 21st century media perspective, has proved to be remarkably prescient. Co-directed by his creative partner and wife Chris Hegedus – who oversaw a digital restoration for this long-awaited Blu-ray release – Depeche Mode 101 is simultaneously an exhilarating portrait of a young band on the cusp of unfathomable success, and an ingenious cinematic forerunner to the hyper-addictive reality television format.

The film follows Basildon's finest on the climactic US leg of their worldwide Music For The Masses tour, focusing on its 101st (hence the title) and final show on June 18, 1988 at the Pasadena Rose Bowl: a stadium they weren't sure they could fill when ambitiously booking it. At the same time, a second camera crew chronicles the cross-country adventures of a busload of fans in their late teens, who won a New York dance contest to see that now sold-out California gig. It's the rare music documentary that has two equally compelling, skilfully interwoven storylines: one charting the giddy ascent of a cult British act winning over America; the other an intimate road movie portrait of the burgeoning subculture they've inspired.

Spiky of hair and sharp of tongue, the competition winners are peroxide'n'mascara square pegs in the era's hetero-normative mallscape, defiantly staring down curious onlookers while decrying the mainstream's dominant cock rock. Their spirited debates about art, commerce, fashion and sex predate the confessional youth formula of MTV's flagship series The Real World, yet the 'bus kids' (as they became known) are blissfully free of look-at-me calculation. Beautifully made-up and nattily behatted – just like summer goth style idol Martin Gore – they're early ambassadors for the 1990s' hydra-headed alternative nation, which Depeche helped birth through their seismic influence on such disparate genres as EDM and industrial metal.

The live Mode are simply sublime: naive synth-pop melodies deepened and darkened by percussive canyons and obsidian textures, matching their visual collaborator Anton Corbijn's moody aesthetic. However, these endearingly wide-eyed Essex boys also retain the fresh-faced allure of a teenage dream, like your favourite Smash Hits poster magically come to life. Resplendent in white and impossibly pretty, frontman Dave Gahan energises the arena with awestruck delight on anthems Strangelove and Everything Counts. The group's imperial phase – creative peak *Violator*, transatlantic chart-topper *Songs Of Faith And Devotion* – was still to come, but as 60,000 devotees spontaneously mimic Gahan's arm-waving through Never Let Me Down Again, it's clear that a precious moment has been seized.

> "Wide-eyed Essex boys, DM retain the allure of the teenage dream."



WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- Blu-ray includes three previously unseen bonus performances: Sacred, Something To Do and the standout, Gore-sung, lighters-aloft ballad A Question Of Lust.
- Alan Wilder is excellent at explaining the sampling technology deployed on fan favourite Black Celebration.
- Andy Fletcher favours zipped-up tank tops, whereas Martin Gore can go shirtless with suspenders – and hasn't aged since 1988.

Getty

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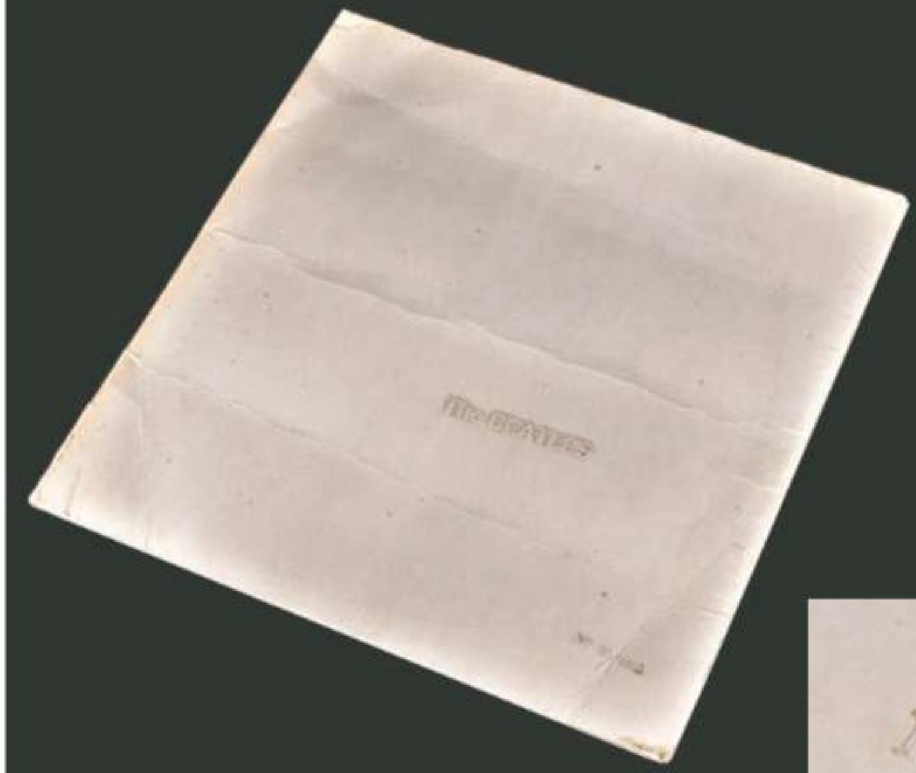

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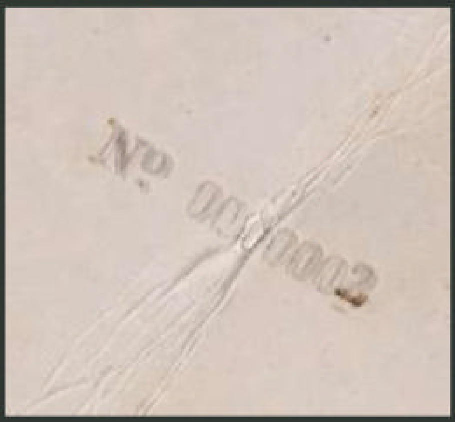


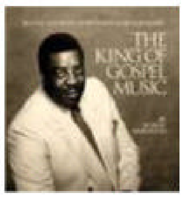
The King Of Gospel Music

★★★

Robert Marovich

MALACO. £44

Concise bio of Rev James Cleveland, with 4-CDs.



The reach of Reverend James Cleveland went far beyond most gospel singers. He led the choir that accompanied Aretha Franklin at her 1972 concert, and Cleveland was also the first gospel artist to receive a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame. Cleveland was even invited to appear on Saturday Night Live, an offer he turned down as inappropriate. He could easily have left the gospel path for the greener pastures of R&B or pop, but instead the Chicago-born singer wove those elements into his brand of church music, modernising without losing sight of its purpose. At less than 100 pages, this LP-sized, well-illustrated hardcover is concise but fact-filled, an informative, insightful look at the artist whose titular nickname is rarely disputed. Four CDs covering nearly four decades of Cleveland's recordings are tucked into the back for aural accompaniment.

Jeff Tamarkin

Major Labels: A History Of Popular Music In Seven Genres

★★★★

Kelefa Sanneh

CANONGATE. £20

Entertaining, diligent survey by the New Yorker journalist.

Much is made of musicians transcending genres, but Sanneh is more interested in the strength and identity of these musical labels, and investigates how they have been formed by musicians, fans and critics. His observations are always fresh and thought-provoking, and presented with clarity and wit. A biracial son of African academics, Sanneh was drawn to punk as a teenager in the '90s precisely because it was an alien form that he might not be expected to like, and initially thought hip-hop was too "mainstream", although his writings on its development are enlightening. Sanneh acknowledges the essential "immaturity" of some music fans, himself included, and in the section on metal – one of his first loves – he revels in its absurdity. He also has a fascination with the misfits and outlaws of country music and delivers a particularly perceptive account of how the genre has been reviled, but adapted to changing tastes and ultimately endured.

Mike Barnes

Magnifico! The A-Z Of Queen

★★★★

Mark Blake

NINE EIGHT. £20

Hailing Queen's brilliance, flamboyance and absurdity.

Great to dip in and out of, Magnifico! partitions all things Queen into bite-sized talking points and lengthier staging posts. Want to try your hand at the Queen questions actor Rhys Thomas tackled on Celebrity Mastermind? Check. Want to know who triumphed when Freddie and Thin Lizzy's Scott Gorham played table tennis, or what each band members' preferred hotel alias was? Check. Blake's 420-page book is infinitely more than trivia-rich stocking-filler, though, dissecting each Queen album with an engaging mix of humour and detailed critical analysis, delving fathoms deep into the before and after of the band's classic line-up, and generally leaving no scara unmooshed. Along the way, we learn exactly why Freddie's voice had such a distinctive timbre, hear Roger Taylor mock Lynyrd Skynyrd and their "Fifty fucking guitarists", and get a minute-by-minute analysis of Queen's famed slot at Live Aid.

James McNair

Rock Concert

★★★★

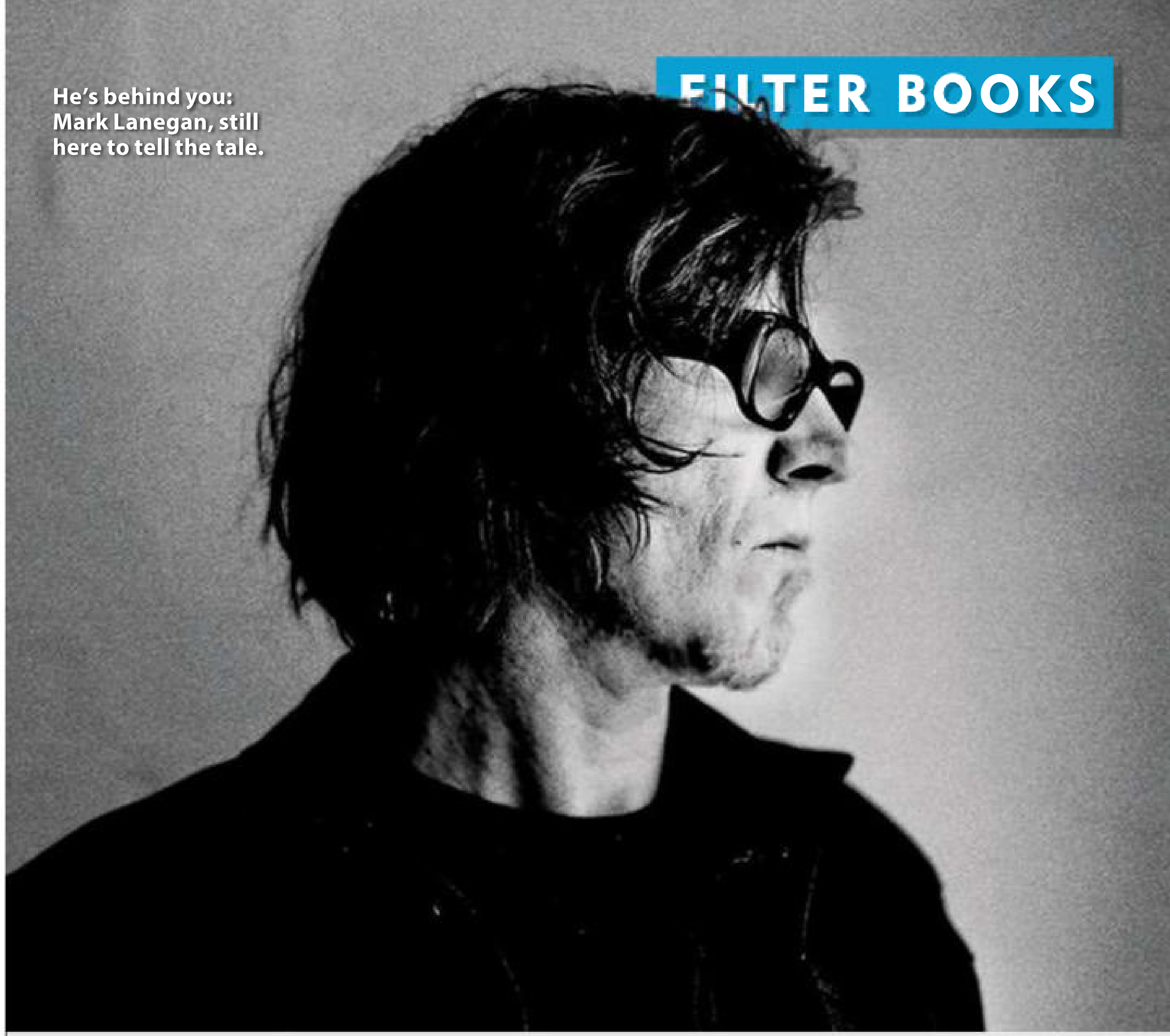
Marc Myers

GROVE PRESS UK. £20

The live rock experience "from Elvis to Live Aid".

As Wall Street Journal music critic, Marc Myers combines an academic's knowledge with an intimate, often gritty grasp of what makes music makers tick. This energetic oral history of live rock blends these elements, as well as personal experiences of fans that emphasise the intense passion music lovers share. From R&B great Big Jay McNeely's description of leading audiences dancing into the street, to AC/DC guitarist Angus Young's explanation of how he developed his animated duckwalking stage persona from Chuck Berry, we get a comprehensive, entertaining account of how the communal experience developed. Myers also lets promoters, sound engineers, stage designers and photographers give their perspective. One Deadhead speaks for all devotees when she says, "There was no going home." Read it loud.

Michael Simmons



He's behind you: Mark Lanegan, still here to tell the tale.

Steve Gullick

Resurrection man

The great harbinger of his own doom reports from the twilight zone. By **Keith Cameron.**

Devil In A Coma

★★★★

Mark Lanegan

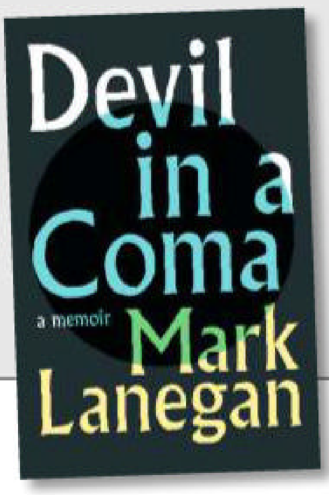
WHITE RABBIT. £12

IF SOME musicians are to be believed, Covid-19 hasn't been all bad: the enforced disruption to normal routines affording valuable peace to contemplate and create with renewed vigour. Mark Lanegan's pandemic experience has been considerably less clement. After "hell-hounds at my back in Los Angeles" prompted a hasty move to rural Ireland, he knocked himself out falling down some stairs while discombobulated by coronavirus, cracking ribs and smashing an already gammy knee. Entering hospital on Saint Patrick's Day 2021, he was put in a medically induced coma and underwent kidney dialysis. His wife Shelley refused to permit an emergency tracheotomy because it might silence his singing voice. She was advised to prepare for the worst.

None of this will much surprise those who read Lanegan's previous memoir with a mixture of revulsion and awe. Sing Backwards And Weep presented the archetypal bad seed, the survivor of an abusive, mayhemic upbringing in eastern Washington state, who somehow escaped the drug-soaked trenches of the '90s Seattle rock scene while his friends Kurt Cobain and Layne Staley fell. The irony that he might now succumb to an invisible killer is not lost on Lanegan, who had previously imagined a far more dramatic exit: "Plane crash, auto crash, gunfire, murder… it made me particularly angry that my life could end like this, lying in a goddamned bed, denied a battlefield."

Although shorter than its predecessor, Devil In A Coma is still a tough, if compelling, read. Sing Backwards And Weep came leavened by Lanegan's unlikely survival, plus much gallows humour, often at his own expense. It was also written with the benefit of 20 years' hindsight, while his latest dance with the grim reaper is still raw in recent memory. Lanegan emerged from his medicated mezzanine to find himself immobile, assailed by delusions and unreliable memories, all of which he recounts with relentless detail in brutish prose and some eldritch poetic interludes ("the wretched carousel/revolving ever faster"). He discerns his coma dreams from reality only by being barefoot in them. "I had slept with [my boots] on for long periods of my life, in case I had to get out in a hurry." Graciously, the book's best line goes to an ex-girlfriend: "I really want to like you, but it's fucking impossible."

Upon discharging himself from hospital for a second time against medical advice (he contracted pneumonia after the first), Lanegan was told by his GP he would die unless he went straight back again. He sought a second opinion, and CT scans revealed his vital organs functioning healthily, his ongoing symptoms "common post-Covid". It's a happy ending, albeit in very relative terms. When he eventually does sing again, Mark Lanegan has the record of a lifetime to make.



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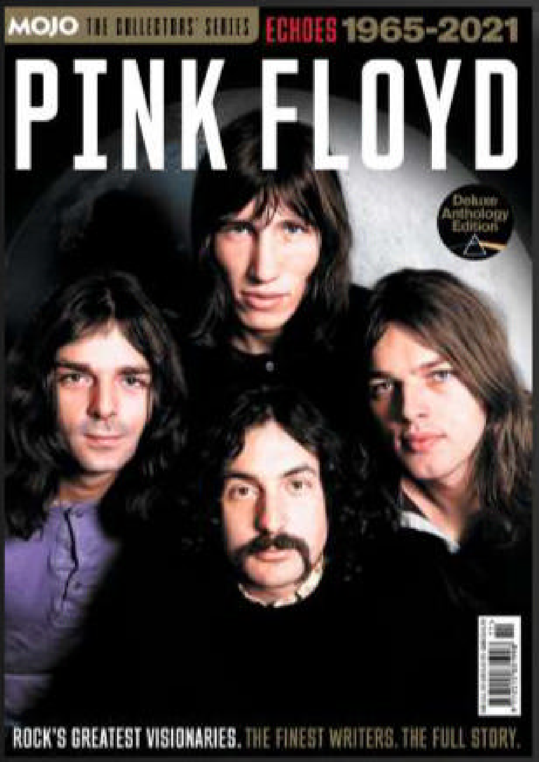
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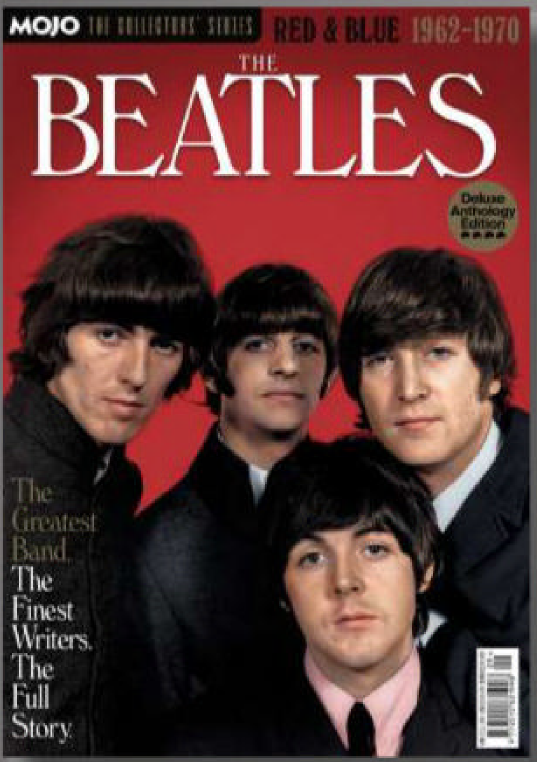
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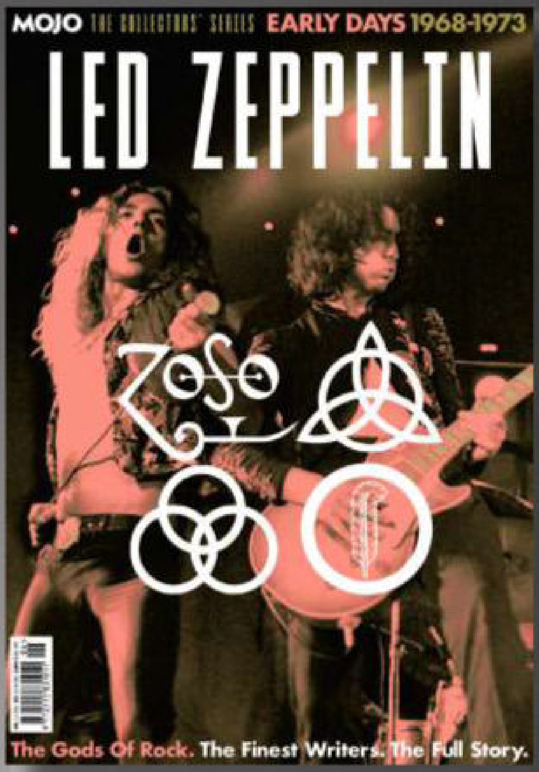
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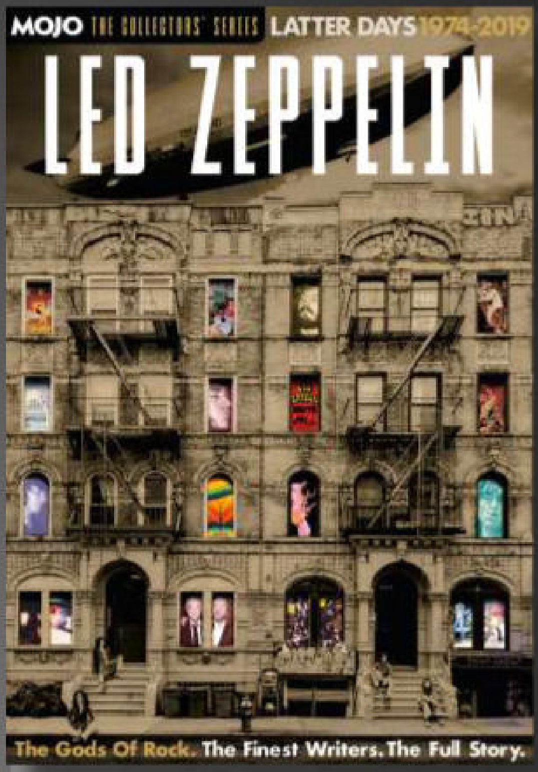
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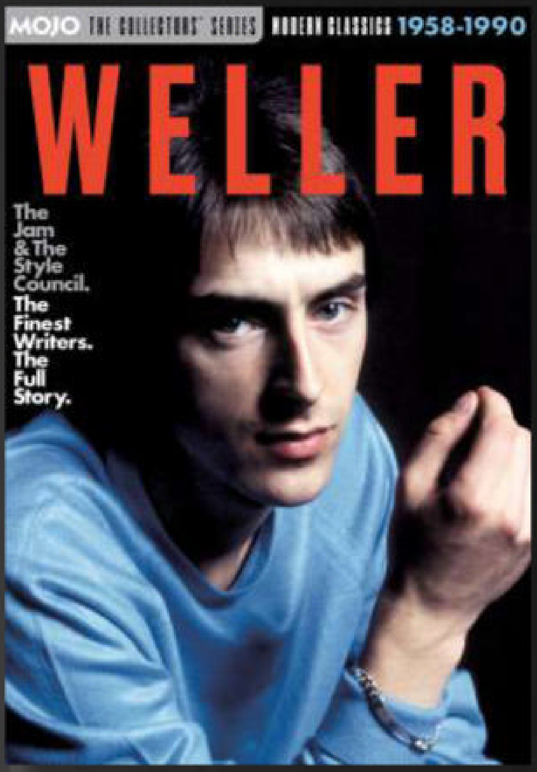
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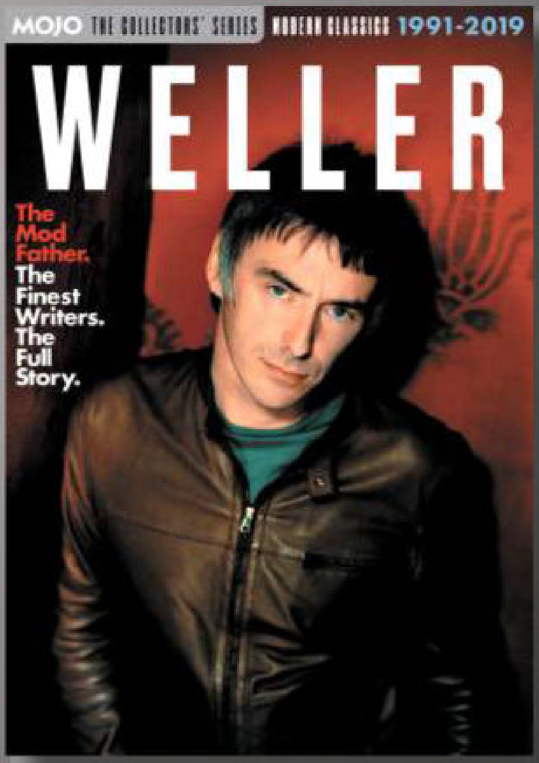
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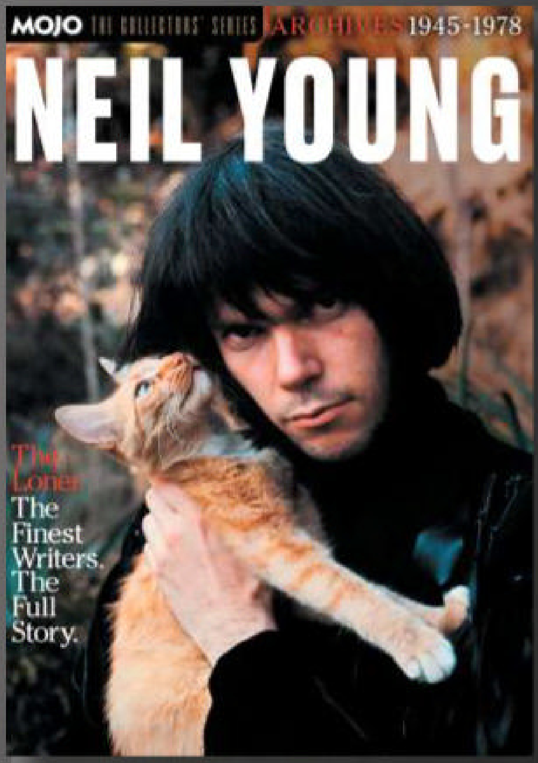
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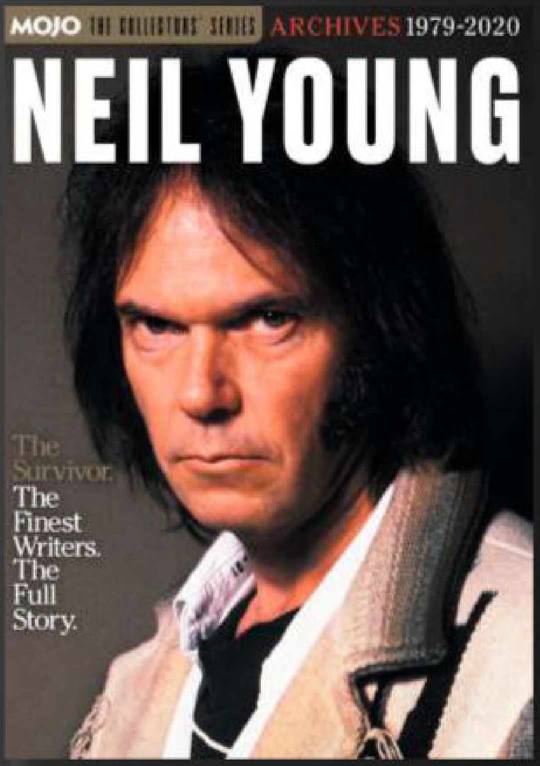
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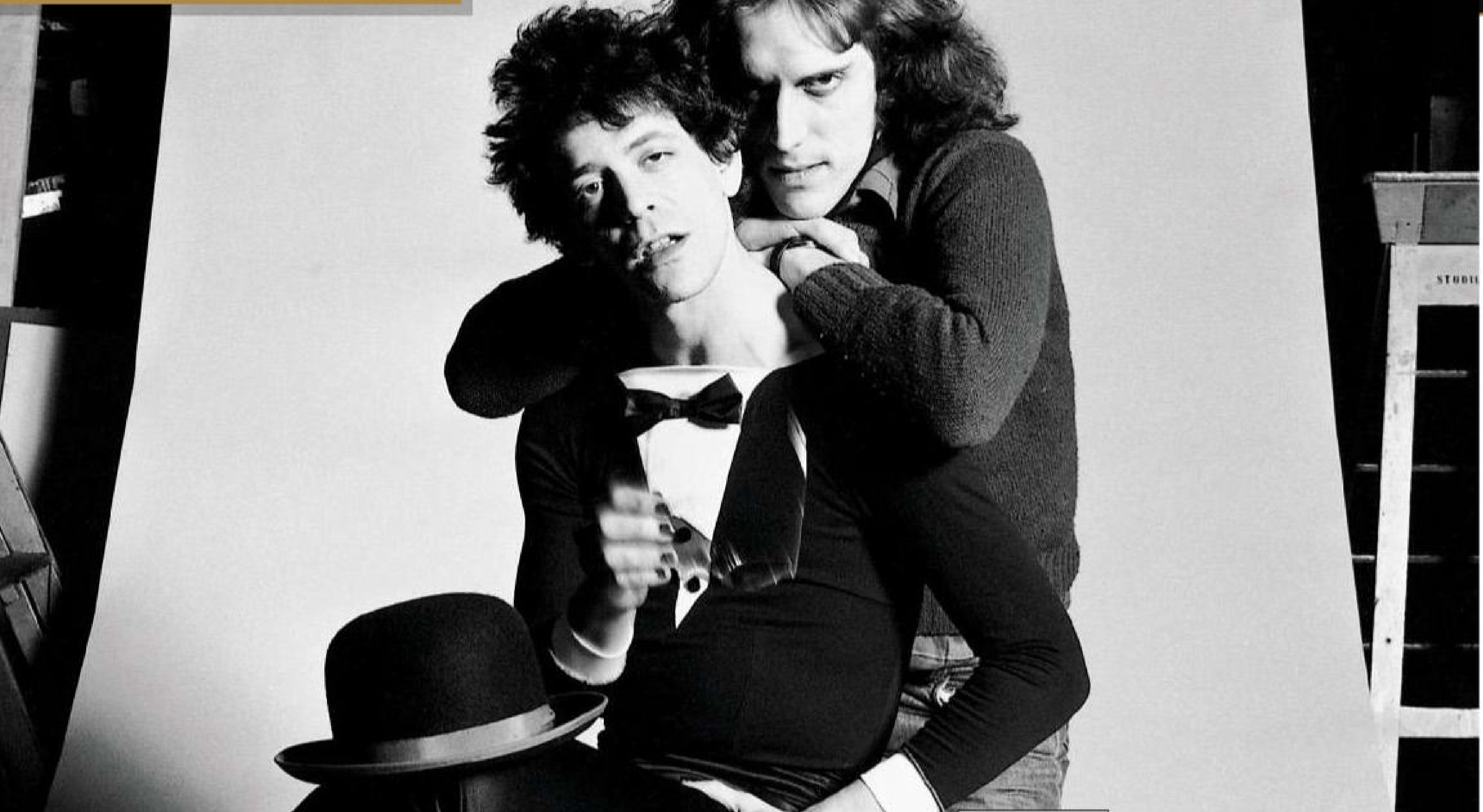


Someone to lean on: self-described "free radical" Mick Rock with the "terrible" Lou Reed in an out-take from the *Coney Island Baby* cover shoot, 1975; (below) Rock in 2018.

Star Shooter

Photographer to Bowie, Iggy, Lou and more, **Mick Rock** left us on November 18.

"ONCE I'M committed to shoot you, I'm gonna love you," Mick Rock told me in 2008. "That's the way it's always been with me. I love everybody who gets in front of my camera. You could be the most obnoxious person in the world. But if you're in front of my camera, I'll love you."

Rock's relationship with his subjects was sealed the hippy-times day he picked up a friend's camera while acid-tripping and snapped away at his lady companion. Everything about the process – peering through the lens, the focus, the click – was, he recalled, wrapped in mystique. The results were similarly elusive: there was no film in the camera.

It was an appropriate beginning for the self-described "free radical, floating about out there". Rock, then a Cambridge undergraduate, was devouring the great Romantic and Symbolist poets at the time.

In late 1969, aged 21, he shot "first love" Syd Barrett for *The Madcap Laughs*. "He looks like what the French called a *poète maudit*," Rock recalled of images that helped define the Barrett mythos.

Becoming official photographer for fellow Barrett admirer David Bowie in 1972 was the catalyst both for Bowie's giant leap into pop mythology and Rock's own career. His 'fellatio' shot of Bowie going down on Mick Ronson's guitar at Oxford Town Hall in June that year outed glam rock's subversive side, something his artist-defining cover images for Lou Reed's *Transformer* and Iggy & The Stooges' *Raw Power* only intensified.

Remarkably, all three had been spontaneous performance shots. When invited to shoot Queen for their breakthrough second album, Rock posed the quartet in the manner of an old Marlene Dietrich glamour still. The makeover was so successful that Queen recreated it for their Bohemian Rhapsody video.

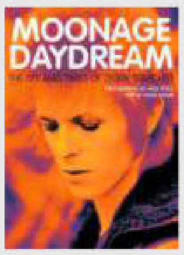
Convivial and creative, Rock enjoyed an empathic relationship with his subjects. "I identified with these characters," he said, especially Bowie, Reed and Iggy – "the terrible trio", as he called them. But by the mid-'80s, his freewheeling, experimental attitude to life came back to bite him. Lost in a cocaine whirl, the phone stopped ringing. One decade, and a quadruple heart bypass op later, Rock re-emerged to find himself feted as 'The Man Who Shot The '70s'.

An outsider by instinct, he made peace with the business, and his work took on new life in numerous books and exhibitions. From Kate Moss to Kings Of Leon, Paul Smith to Nikon, creatives worldwide craved the kudos of a Mick Rock photoshoot. They also got the near-archetypal rock'n'roll character, wild-haired with trademark dark glasses and denims, and a cheery line in streetwise patter.

I once asked Mick Rock what makes a great rock photo. "Something that sticks in the mind," he said briskly. For a photographer who strived to capture auras, which he did so well, he made it sound so simple. "OK love, 'bye."

Mark Paytress

> "If you're in front of my camera, I'll love you."
> MICK ROCK



THE LEGACY

The Book: Moonage Daydream: The Life And Times Of Ziggy Stardust (Genesis Publications), Mick Rock and David Bowie

The Look: Published in 2003, this exquisite, signed, long-out-of-print limited edition collaboration between photographer and subject chronicles Bowie's two-year whirl as Ziggy Stardust. With over 650 Mick Rock images, plus 15,000 words from Bowie, it's the definitive insider account. "David is really my favourite subject," recalled the photographer. "Some psycho-spiritual thing happened to him during this time."

© Mick Rock, Nathalie Rock

Graeme Edge

Moody Blues drummer

BORN 1941

Born in Staffordshire and transplanted to Birmingham as a young boy, Graeme Edge came from a musical family which included a mother who'd played piano for silent movies and several generations of musical hall singers on his father's side. His early groups included The Silhouettes and, briefly with Roy Wood in the line-up, Gerry Levene & The Avengers. Edge left to form The R&B Preachers, who, with Ray Thomas and Mike Pinder, evolved into The Moody Blues in 1964. As tastes and their line-up changed again, and they shifted from R&B to orchestrated, progressive rock, Edge began contributing the poems which memorably punctuated such concept-based albums as *Days Of Future Passed*, a US Number 3 in 1967 containing band cornerstone Nights In White Satin. His poesy did not hold back, and he told Record Mirror in 1970: "I think it is something of a compliment to be called 'pretentious'." Top 10 regulars in the UK album charts, and embraced by the US, the huge-selling group went on hiatus from 1974, whereupon Edge sailed the Med in his yacht Delia and recorded two records with his own Graeme Edge Band. After The Moody Blues re-formed in 1978 to record eight more LPs, he also played with jazzers Loud, Confident & Rong in London's clubs in the '80s. He retired in 2018, the last original Moody in the line-up, whereupon the band was done. "It's true that he kept the group together throughout all the years," said singer and guitarist Justin Hayward, "because he loved it".

Ian Harrison

Graeme Edge: drummer, poet and Moody Blues stalwart.

Adrian Boot, Getty (2), Courtesy of English Electric Records

Ronnie Wilson

Gap Band co-founder

BORN 1948

Able to switch between trumpet, keyboards, percussion and background vocals, Ronnie Wilson was the most versatile member of The Gap Band, the influential and much-sampled soul and funk group he co-founded in Tulsa with his younger siblings, singer Charlie and bassist Robert. Patenting a distinctive dance sound defined by hollering vocals and grinding basslines, The Gap Band – whose name was an acronym for Greenwood, Archer & Pine, a black neighbourhood in Tulsa – stacked up 33 US R&B hits between 1977 and 1995, including 1980's Oops Up Side Your Head, which Wilson co-wrote. The group grew out of Ronnie's late-'60s band Creative Sounds and debuted in 1974 on Leon Russell's Shelter label before tasting mainstream success in the 1980s. After the band dissolved in 2010, Wilson sang gospel and found solace in religion.

Charles Waring

Alvin 'Seeco' Patterson

Wailers roots percussionist

BORN 1930

Born in Havana, the man nicknamed 'Seeco', after his birthname Francisco, had worked as a bauxite miner and played percussion with calypso singer Lord Flea when he met Bob Marley in Kingston. He facilitated the fledgling Wailers' momentous audition at Coxsone Dodd's Studio One in 1963, and began playing on Wailers recordings in 1967. He accompanied the band on their 1973 UK tour and became an integral part of the outfit after the departure of Peter Tosh and Bunny Livingstone the following year. Staying with Marley for the rest of the Tuff Gong's life, Seeco played live and contributed to albums including *Exodus*, *Kaya*, *Survival* and *Uprising*. A friend, mentor and confidant, he was also present when Marley, his wife Rita and his manager were shot by gunmen before the Smile Jamaica concert in December 1976, and when Marley received cancer treatment in New York and West Germany. After Marley's death in May 1981, Seeco joined his bandmates to play Natural Mystic at his funeral, and continued to perform with The Wailers' band. He retired in 1990 after suffering a brain haemorrhage.

> "Seeco was Bob Marley's friend, mentor and confidant."

Clive Prior

Big Big Train's David Longdon: full of music.

David Longdon

Big Big Train singer, instrumentalist

BORN 1965

With his serious spectacles and shortage of flowing locks, David Longdon never looked like a classic frontman. But in progressive rock it is, of course, the music that matters, and Longdon was full of it, helping turn Big Big Train from a Dorset-based studio project into a UK Top 40 band with a debut American tour in the offing. Success had come late to the Nottingham-born musician: in 1996 he reached the last two in auditions to replace Phil Collins in Genesis but the job went to Ray Wilson (a tantalising 'what if'). Longdon began to fear his musical career would never take off but then he joined Big Big Train to record their breakthrough, *The Underfall Yard* (2009). A series of ambitious releases and a sprinkling of live shows turned them into prog favourites. At the time of Longdon's tragic death, from a head injury after a fall, he was working on a solo album.

John Bungey

Margo Guryan: breathy, stylish pop a speciality.

Margo Guryan

Moonlit jazz & sunshine pop

BORN 1937

Margo Guryan created a small, stylish body of work, mostly breathy '60s pop rooted in jazz harmony, as evinced by a single, essential album, *Take A Picture*, which has grown in reputation over time. Born and raised in Queens, New York, pianist and singer Guryan studied at the Lenox School Of Jazz under teachers Bill Evans, Jim Hall and Max Roach. A 1958 deal with Atlantic revealed a limited vocal range that didn't suit contemporary styles, though her songs were recorded by Chris Connor (Moon Ride), Harry Belafonte and others. She also wrote lyrics for Ornette Coleman. In 1966, she'd stopped writing and was working as assistant to master jazz producer Creed Taylor when she heard The Beach Boys' God Only Knows, which transfixed her and inspired new compositions that would be covered by Claudine Longet, Harry Nilsson, Jackie DeShannon and Julie London. Her groovy Sunday Morning was a hit for Spanky And Our Gang. That success led to her gorgeous 1968 *Take A Picture* album for Bell, where the breathy, girlish delivery deemed unsuitable for jazz in the '50s now made perfect sense. The LP flopped, but when it was rediscovered circa 2000 – championed by the likes of Saint Etienne and Belle & Sebastian – she enjoyed a late-career revival. Her final single in 2007, 16 Words, took as its lyric 16 words from George Bush's 2003 speech justifying the coming Iraq war. She also released, in 2009, a suite of 14 variations on the piano melody, Chopsticks.

Jim Irvin

John Goodsall

Jazz-fusion guitarist

BORN 1953

John Goodsall was born in Pennsylvania but grew up in Surrey. A precocious musical talent, as a teenager he played with Carol Grimes' group Babylon, The Alan Bown Set and his own Beefheart-indebted group Sandoz before joining Atomic Rooster for 1973's *Nice & Greasy*. In 1975 he was one of the founder members of jazz fusionists Brand X, whose early line-up featured Phil Collins on drums. Relocating to Los Angeles in 1980, Goodsall's session credits (as part of the group Zoo Drive) included dates for Michael Des Barres, Ava Cherry, L. Ron Hubbard's daughter Diane and Toni Basil, whose 1981 album *Word Of Mouth* featured the worldwide hit Mickey. He also played with Bill Bruford, Peter Gabriel, Billy Idol, King Sunny Adé, Jeff Beck, Mick Fleetwood, and Bryan Adams, among others, and from 1989 to 1994 led his own jazz-rock group Fire Merchants. From 1992 to 1998, and from 2016, he re-formed Brand X, leading them until his death.

Clive Prior

Billy Hinsche

Honorary Beach Boy

BORN 1951

Manila-born Billy Hinsche was at high school in Los Angeles when he met Desi Arnaz Jr. and Dean Paul Martin, respectively the sons of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, and Dean Martin. The three formed pop trio Dino, Desi & Billy and signed to Sinatra's label Reprise, scoring 1965's Lee Hazlewood-produced US Number 17 I'm A Fool when they were just 14. Largely hitless thereafter, the group split in 1969, but numbered among their fans The Beach Boys, and Hinsche would play harmonica on 1965's Beach Party, write with all three Wilson brothers and serve as vocalist/instrumentalist in The Beach Boys' live band between 1971 and 1977 and 1982 to 1996, as well as other offshoots. Hinsche's other credits included backing vocals on Elton John's Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me and Warren Zevon's Desperados Under The Eaves. Though Dino was killed in a jet crash in 1987, his brother Ricci later teamed up with Desi and Billy for live work from 1998 to 2010.

Ian Harrison

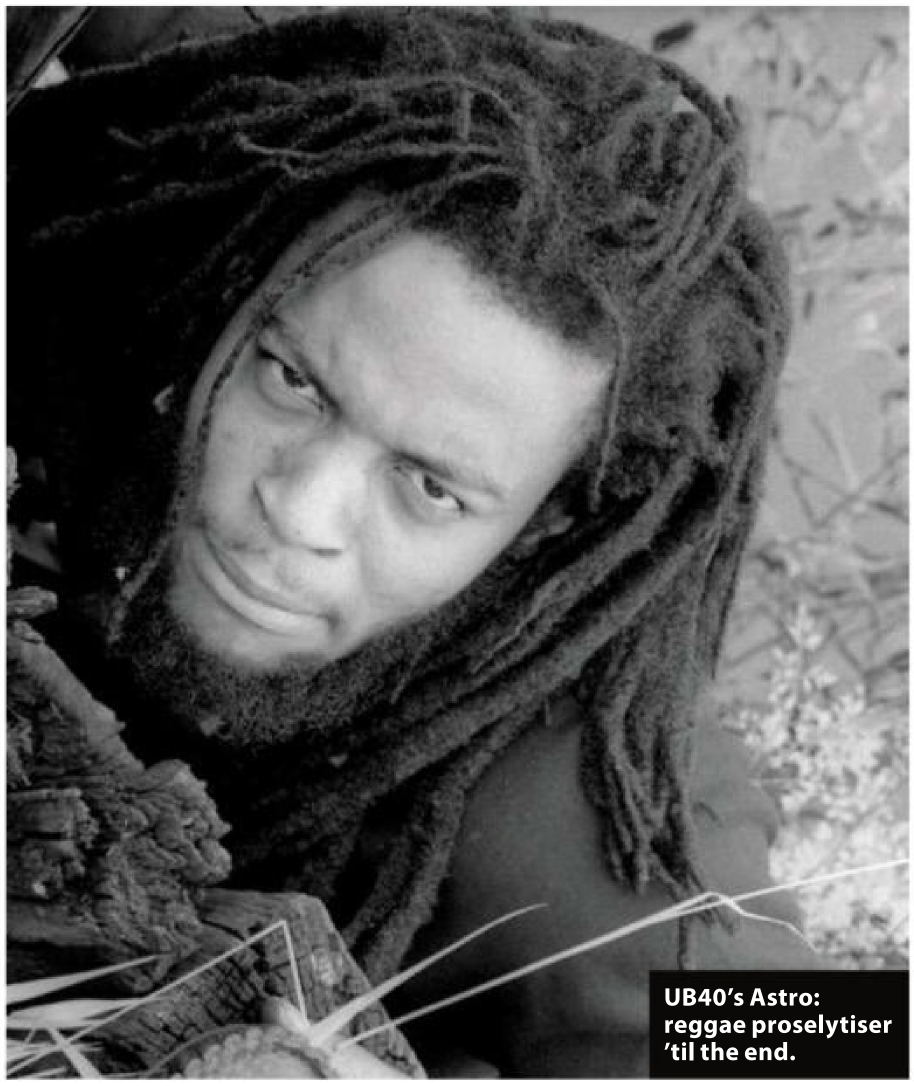
Astro

UB40's MC

BORN 1957

Nicknamed for the Astronaut-model Airwair boots he wore as a youth, Birmingham-born Terence Wilson was the last member to join the classic UB40 line-up. He later recalled how, as a warm-up reggae DJ in early 1979, he introduced the band and then "refused to get off-stage". Credited for 'Talk Over Vocal' on August 1980's Number 2 album debut *Signing Off*, his toasting was heard on 12 Bar and Madam Medusa, a chilling depiction of Margaret Thatcher and her socially ruinous policies. An energetic and crucial part of the UB40 live experience, Astro also played trumpet on 1981's *Present Arms*, and memorably added a new verse to the group's global smash cover of Neil Diamond's Red Red Wine in 1983. Settled into the reggae juggernaut's years of hit-making, in 1987 he sang the Number 12 hit Rat In Mi Kitchen, whose parent album was just one of 10 Top 10 LPs. However, dissatisfied with the group's country and western direction and the diminution of his contributions to 2013's *Getting Over The Storm*, he jumped ship to ex-vocalist Ali Campbell's breakaway UB40 formation, whose *Real Labour Of Love* album reached Number 2 in 2018. They had recorded a new album entitled *Unprecedented* and were planning live dates when Astro, still a proselytiser for reggae music, passed away. As he told Mat Snow in 1983, "When we came out, just the fact that half the band are white when reggae was supposed to be for Rastas only – [people] started to realise that reggae is just music and it's there for whoever wants to listen to it, and whoever wants to play it."

Ian Harrison



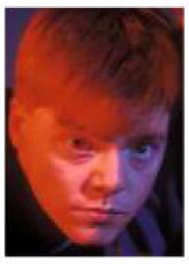
UB40's Astro: reggae proselytiser 'til the end.

Courtesy of Sundazed Music, Justinthomasphotography.co.uk

Andrew Barker

808 Statesman

BORN 1968



It was in storied Manchester record shop Eastern Bloc at the end of the '80s that Andrew Barker's future began. The store was owned by Martin Price, founder of UK techno outfit 808 State, who invited Barker and fellow Spinmasters DJ Darren Partington to bring their dance-floor nous to the group's raw, high-energy electronics. Although not involved in recording their first UK hit, Pacific State, Barker helped break the record when DJing (via cassette demo), while his beat-making prowess helped lift the remaining tracks on 1989's Quadrastate EP. It led to a deal with ZTT, where two more Top 10 singles followed – 1990's Cubik/Olympic and 1991's mighty In Yer Face – as well a pair of gold-selling albums. After 2002, 808 State went on hiatus, but Barker continued to DJ. After convincing the band's Graham Massey to return to the studio, 2019's well-received *Transmission Suite* proved that 808 State still packed a punch.

Stephen Worthy

Dean Stockwell

Actor, channel for music

BORN 1936

A former child actor who starred alongside Errol Flynn and Gene Kelly, Dean Stockwell took a break from acting in the mid-'60s and embraced the Californian hippy dream, befriending, among others, Neil Young. Young's 1970 masterpiece *After The Gold Rush* was inspired by a film script by Stockwell, who would go on to design the drunken cover art for Young's 1977 LP *American Stars'n Bars*, while in 1982 the two would co-direct and star (alongside Devo) in the cult comedy Human Highway. After a short detour into real estate, Stockwell's screen career resumed in 1984, another unforgettable musical moment coming in David Lynch's 1986 disturbing noir-thriller Blue Velvet. Playing the Lethean, white-faced pimp Ben, when he lip-sync'd Roy Orbison's In Dreams into an industrial spotlight, the deep and profound mysteries of the song were revealed as never before. He was also familiar to viewers as Admiral Calavicci from sci-fi TV show Quantum Leap. After retiring from acting in 2015, he worked in sculpture.

Clive Prior

Bit parade: journalist Maureen Cleave bonded with The Beatles.

Maureen Cleave

Journalist, Fabs confidante

BORN 1934

Born in British India, Maureen Cleave was working as the London Evening Standard's showbiz editor and pop critic when she first encountered The Beatles in Liverpool in January 1963. Having written the first national article on the group, a bond was formed, particularly with John Lennon: she was present when The Beatles received their MBEs at Buckingham Palace, while a later interview with Lennon in March 1966 featured his notorious "bigger than Jesus" remark, provoking much disquiet in the US Christian heartlands. Cleave – affectionately dubbed "Maureen Thingy" by the group – was on-hand to watch the fireworks during the Fabs' last US tour. She refuted the rumour that Lennon wrote Norwegian Wood about her, but lent constructive criticism to the lyrics for A Hard Day's Night. She left The Beatles' orbit in 1966, later reflecting on how, "Theirs was the fascination of repetitive siblings, the almost sinister attraction of identical quads – how alike they were, how very different." She also guested on Juke Box Jury, wrote for the Telegraph and The Observer, and interviewed names including the Stones and Sister Rosetta Tharpe.

Clive Prior

THEY ALSO SERVED

TURBONEGRO frontman **HENK VON HELVETE** (right, B.1972) joined the denim'n'leather Norwegian punks in 1993, bringing his extrovert persona to LPs including *Ass Cobra* and *Apocalypse Dudes*. The group disbanded due to his heroin addiction in 1998. In 2009, he had a Norwegian Number 1 duetting with **Maria Solheim** and led **Doctor Midnight & The Mercy Cult**.

DOO-WOPPER **PHIL MARGO** (B.1942) co-founded **The Tokens** in New York in 1955. In 1961, the group topped the Billboard chart with The Lion Sleeps Tonight. With his bandmates, Margo produced successful singles for groups such as **Dawn**, **The Happenings** and **The Chiffons**. He later wrote and produced TV series including Diff'rent Strokes and penned science-fiction. The Tokens were inducted into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame in 2004.

PIANIST **RUSSELL HARDY** (B.1941) played free jazz with **The People Band** before joining **Ian Dury** in pub rock heroes **Kilburn & The High Roads** in 1970. The two would co-write songs including Rough Kids, Upminster Kid and Crippled With Nerves, and Hardy would appear on the Kilburns' recordings released as *Wotabunch!* in 1977. By this time Dury was leading the **Blockheads**, but would continue to write with Hardy, who later became a carpenter.

JAZZER **EMMETT CHAPMAN** (below, B.1936) played guitar with **Barney Kessel** and **Tim Buckley**, and later built a nine-stringed 'Freedom Guitar' for two-handed fret tapping. This evolved into the electric polyphonic stringed instrument called the Chapman Stick. In 1974 he founded Stick Enterprises to produce his creation. Eminent adopters included King Crimson's **Tony Levin** and **Mike Oldfield**.

SOUL VOICE **EVETTE BENTON** (B.1953) was one third of Philly vocal trio **The Sweethearts Of Sigma**, and sang on recordings by **Patti LaBelle**, **The Spinners**, **The Stylistics**, **Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes**, **Billy Paul**, **MFSB**, **Dionne Warwick**, **Lou Rawls**, **Grace Jones**, **The O'Jays**, **Elton John**, **Teddy Pendergrass**, **Cat Stevens** and many more.

COUNTY TIPPERARY-born **DECLAN MULLIGAN** (B.1938) moved to San Francisco in 1962, where he joined British Invasion-influenced beat group **The Beau Brummels** in 1964. With Mulligan's harmonica opening, debut single Laugh, Laugh reached US 15, while follow-up Just A Little went Top 10. He was dismissed from the band in 1965, but joined a re-formed Beau Brummels in 1974, later playing with **The Black Velvet Band** and **Mulligan Stew**.

DRUMMER **JOE SIRACUSA** (B.1922) played with **Spike Jones And His City Slickers** from 1946 to 1952, singing on their 1951 version of Yes! We Have No Bananas. He later worked in sound effects and animation for cartoons, making the acquaintance of Theodor 'Dr. Seuss' Geisel and Stan Lee. He was the last living member of Jones's influential, madcap comedy band.

COUNTRY singer and guitarist **ROSE LEE MAPHIS** (B.1922) played in all-female quartet **The Saddle Sweethearts** as a teen before forming a duo with her guitar virtuoso husband Joe, who she married in 1953. Bakersfield sound pioneers, they cut their *Mr. & Mrs. Country Music* LP in 1964, while their song Dim Lights, Thick Smoke (And Loud, Loud Music) was recorded by **Flatt & Scruggs**, **The Flying Burrito Brothers** and **Conway Twitty**, among others.

SINGER/GUITARIST **KENNY DANIEL** (B.1946) fronted Texas's Beatles-indebted garage rockers **Kenny And The Kasuals**. 1966's regional hit 45 Journey To Tyme remains a fuzzed-up slice of raw, early psychedelia. They split the following year (Daniel was drafted and sent to Vietnam), though he re-formed the band when punk hit and supported **Patti Smith** and **Iggy Pop** among others.

GUITARIST, bassist, and vocalist **KEITH ALLISON** (B.1942) joined **Paul Revere & The Raiders** in 1968. After the name change to **The Raiders**, he appeared on the 1970 Top 20 hit Indian Reservation. A regular co-writer with frontman **Mark Lindsay**, he left the group in 1975. As a session player, Allison recorded with **The Monkees**, **Harry Nilsson** and **Ringo Starr**, who he collaborated with until 2010. He also played with **The Waddy Wachtel Band** from 2000 to 2019.

CANADIAN-born **RICK JONES** (above, B.1937) played keyboards and co-wrote most of the songs for London country rockers **Meal Ticket**, who released three LPs from 1977 to 1978. Previously he'd been known to the British public for singing on kids' BBC TV show Play School and, later, as puppet master Yoffy on Fingerbobs.

Clive Prior, James Allen and Ian Harrison

Courtesy of Valerie Neale, Alamy (2), Getty (2), Avalon.red

Marquee Loons: (clockwise from main) Alexis Korner, Dick Heckstall-Smith, Cyril Davies, Ginger Baker (obscured) and Art Themen, on-stage with Blues Incorporated; groovers outside the Marquee; Long John Baldry; R&B All-Stars wax.

JANUARY 1964

...Cyril Davies, dead and gone

JANUARY 7 It was all starting to happen for the British blues. The Rolling Stones had just begun their first headline UK tour and were recording their debut LP. Waiting in the wings were multitudinous groups including The Animals, The Yardbirds and, a few years later, Fleetwood Mac. And yet. South Harrow bluesman Cyril Davies, a harmonica master, vocalist and Leadbelly obsessive who had done so much to fan the British blues flame, died today, just weeks from his 32nd birthday.

Born in Denham on January 23, 1932, Davies was a panel beater and car mechanic by day. He'd played banjo in trad jazz and skiffle groups before converting to the blues. After he met guitarist Alexis Korner, the two opened the London Blues And Barrelhouse Club at The Round House pub on Wardour Street in 1957. With booking assistance from Chris Barber, the night hosted eminent visitors including Big Bill Broonzy, Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Champion Jack Dupree, among many others. A game-changing electric appearance by Muddy Waters presaged Davies' conversion to playing amplified harmonica, and by early '62, he and Korner were playing in Blues Incorporated at such volume that they were asked to vacate The Round House.

They duly decamped to The Ealing Club, hailed as the first bona fide R&B night in the country, where various Stones, Eric Clapton, Eric Burdon and more came to hear the new sound. One fan, and occasional guest vocalist, was a young Mick Jagger, who asked the older man for harmonica tips. "[Davies] was a very taciturn and difficult person, and he didn't want to show me anything," Jagger recalled. "He told me to fuck off, basically." He also remembered the famously thirsty Davies emptying his bag of harmonicas on the floor if he couldn't locate the correct model. Jimmy Page, meanwhile, would later write, "one man pioneered a sound that was to give incentive to every group of this time… Cyril Davies."

Though they cut the studio-recorded faux gig document *R&B From The Marquee* LP in summer, Davies' insistence on playing the pure blues sat uneasily with Korner accommodating jazz elements, after new drummer Ginger Baker replaced a Stones-bound Charlie Watts and Graham Bond came in on sax. In October '62 Davies left the band and formed his R&B All-Stars with various ex-members of Lord Sutch's Savages and briefly, Jimmy Page. Later, singer Long John Baldry and South African backing vocalists The Velvettes joined the firm. With a repertoire of Chicago blues covers and originals, they took over Blues Inc's Thursday night Marquee slot and won fans including Rod Stewart, who recalled, "Davies… could play a real storm."

1963 was a good year for Cyril 'The Squirrel'. He signed to Pye and released debut 45 Country Line Special (hailed by Ray Davies as "one of the greatest records of its type ever made… seminal English R&B"), appeared on TV shows including ITV's Hullabaloo and began touring the regions. He told Record Mirror's Norman Jopling that he was planning a trip to Chicago and that, "although I have been playing the blues for 12 years, I feel that there is so much more for me to do."

Yet, given to dropping references to the Krays and other criminal associates, he was also a man of complex moods who believed that to play the blues, you had to live them. Keyboardist Nicky Hopkins recalled to NME how one night at the Marquee Davies punched a mirror and shattered it: "You could see the pain in his face – mental pain." By summer '63, the whisky-downing Davies had entered

PYE INTERNATIONAL
45 RPM
7N.25194
1.45.1194-A
MINSTREL MUSIC
COUNTRY LINE SPECIAL
(Cyril Davies)
CYRIL DAVIES
and his
Rhythm and Blues All Stars

> "He told me to fuck off, basically."
> **MICK JAGGER**

the arena of the unwell. Already balding and heavy set, eventually he had to walk with a stick. Speaking to Spencer Leigh, Long John Baldry recalled Davies prophesying his own death.

Baldry marked Davies' demise with a performance by the All-Stars at Eel Pie Island, with support from Jeff Beck and The Tridents. Afterwards, attendee Rod Stewart recalled waiting for the Waterloo train at Twickenham station and playing Smokestack Lightning on his harmonica, whereupon Baldry approached with an offer to join the All-Stars. They later worked together in the Hoochie Coochie Men and Steampacket, just two individuals who spun out of Davies' orbit to achieve a musical success he would never enjoy.

Like Robert Johnson, Blind Lemon Jefferson or Sonny Boy Williamson I, mystery surrounds his early death – some accounts have him dying after collapsing on-stage at Eel Pie Island – the cause of which has been variously attributed to pleurisy, endocarditis and alcohol poisoning. Like those figures, he's similarly suspended in time. Fifty-eight years on, Cyril Davies is still a no-surrender standard-bearer for the Chicago blues, but then, he always knew the advantages in taking the hard line. As his old partner Alexis Korner said in tribute, he was loath to engage another harmonica player. "When you've worked with Cyril," he said, "you just cannot accept second best."

Ian Harrison

wand
LOUIE LOUIE
THE KINGSMEN

Wrong Song Louie: Jack Ely plots deviance undreamt of.

Kingsmen filth shock!

JANUARY 4 **Portland garage rockers The Kingsmen are at US Number 2 with their raucously sloppy cover of Richard Berry's lonely sailor ode Louie Louie. However, Indiana Governor Matthew Welsh has written to the Indiana Broadcasters Association requesting it be banned for its allegedly "pornographic" lyrics, after two outraged college students from Frankfort tipped him off about fanciful typewritten transcriptions circulating among the nation's teens. Broadcasters admit they're stymied by singer Jack Ely's slack-jawed, unclear performance, though the FBI continue to investigate it into 1965. The group's label Wand deny everything, and publisher Max Firetag offers $1,000 for anyone who can find any obscene words. Sales are enhanced, and some suspect it's all a PR stunt.**

All we are Francais-ing: in Gallic chapeaus, the Fabs with actress Sophie Hardy (right).

FABS LABEL BATTLE RAGES

JANUARY 17 Vee-Jay Records begins a legal response to the Capitol and Swan labels for the rights to release Beatles product in the US. Vee-Jay, who have the notorious *Jolly What! The Beatles & Frank Ifield On Stage* LP ready to go, deny a previous contract has lapsed. Other cash-ins of the moment include The Swans' The Boy With The Beatle Hair, Donna Lynn's My Boyfriend Got A Beatle Haircut and The Liverpools' *Beatle Mania! In The USA* LP. I Want To Hold Your Hand, meanwhile, hits US Number 3 (on Capitol) on January 25. Away from it all, on January 17 the Fabs began 18 days of gigs at Paris's Olympia Theatre, with Sylvie Vartan and Trini Lopez.

Hoppy Hopkins, Getty (3), Topfoto, Alamy (2), Mirrorpix

ALSO ON!

TOTP DEBUTS

1 New music chart show Top Of The Pops is broadcast at 6.35pm on BBC1 from a former Wesleyan chapel in Rusholme, Manchester. Appearing are **Dusty Springfield** (above), the **Stones**, **The Dave Clark Five**, **The Hollies**, **The Swinging Blue Jeans** and, at Number 1, **The Beatles**.

HELLO, HANK JR.

1 14-year-old **Hank Williams Jr.** releases his debut single, exactly 11 years after the death of his famous father. It's a cover of his dad's 1950 country Number 1, Long Gone Lonesome Blues.

TOP NUN

8 Belgium's **Singing Nun**, AKA Jeannine Deckers, peaks at UK Number 7 with her single Dominique. The 45 and her album, *Sœur Sourire*, also reach US Number 1.

TEAGARDEN GOODBYE

15 Veteran jazz trombonist and vocalist **Jack Teagarden**, who worked with **Louis Armstrong**, **Benny Goodman** and more, dies in New Orleans aged 58 after suffering from pneumonia.

JFK LP

25 There are seven LPs dedicated to President **John F. Kennedy**, who was assassinated in November 1963, in the Billboard 200. Many contain his speeches: at 12 was *That Was The Week That Was: The British Broadcasting Corporation's Tribute*, which was recorded and broadcast in just 24 hours.

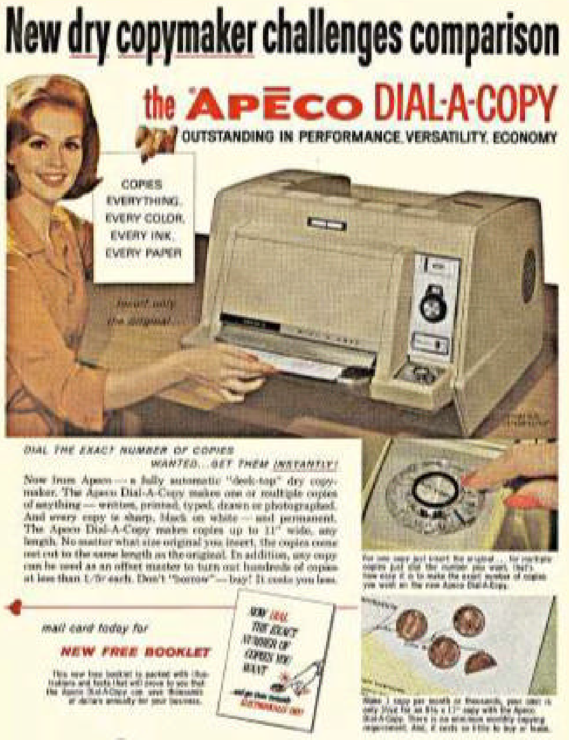
TOP TEN

AUSTRALIAN SINGLES JANUARY 25

1 **I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND** THE BEATLES PARLOPHONE
2 **DO YOU LOVE ME** BRIAN POOLE & THE TREMELOES DECCA
3 **SHE LOVES YOU** THE BEATLES PARLOPHONE
4 **SECRET LOVE** KATHY KIRBY DECCA
5 **THE CRUSHER** THE ATLANTICS CBS
6 **BEACH BALL** JIMMY HANNAN RG RECORDS
7 **ROYAL TELEPHONE** JIMMY LITTLE FESTIVAL RECORDS
8 **VAYA CON DIOS** KATHIE McCORMACK RCA
9 **BEAUTIFUL DREAMER** ROY ORBISON LONDON
10 **DON'T TALK TO HIM** CLIFF RICHARD COLUMBIA

Secret affair: Kathy Kirby is at Number 4.

AD ARCHIVE 1964



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Why don't modern printers have telephone-style dials? (Warning: may confuse carbon paper die-hards who'll try calling the speaking clock on it).

MIDDLE OF THE ROAD
CHIRPY CHIRPY CHEEP CHEEP
RAININ' 'N PAININ'
RCA
STEREO

Blessed is the game: (clockwise from top left) boy in the hood, Bob Dylan; his hip-hop pal Kurtis Blow; comedy couple Peter Sellers and Sophia Loren; Cheep thrills: Middle Of The Road's warm-up act was M.T. Wizzard; chairman of the 'board, Edgar Froese.

Is Dylan a Hip-Hopper?

Brain scrambled from attempting to work out rock's most puzzling mysteries? Please allow us to help.

I recently chanced upon Bob Dylan rapping with Kurtis Blow on 1986's song Street Rock. How did this come about? It's wonderfully bonkers.

Dean Grant, via e-mail

MOJO says: Dylan, who drops two verses on the track, got down with the programme after he and Harlem MC Kurtis Blow met at New York's Power Station studios. Writing in Chronicles, Dylan expressed his admiration for young rappers who were "beating drums, tearing it up, hurling horses over cliffs. They were all poets and knew what was going on," and said Blow had turned him on to Ice-T, Public Enemy, N.W.A. and Run-D.M.C. (as N.W.A. didn't form until 1987, did Kurtis and Bob keep in touch?). It doesn't end there: in 2006, Episode Two of Theme Time Radio Hour found Bob reciting lyrics from LL Cool J's Mama Said Knock You Out, while other editions included selections by De La Soul, P. Diddy and the Beastie Boys. The latter have gained sample clearance from Dylan on numerous occasions (Mike D proudly recalled bartering Bob down from $2,000 to $700 to use Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues on 1992's Finger Lickin' Good, and called him, "one of the first B-Boys, if not the first"), as have Cypress Hill and Necro. That's without mentioning Dylan's cameo in a Wyclef Jean video. And don't *Infidels* and this year's Record Store Day Reggae Remix EP Jokerman/I And I by Doctor Dread suggest Bob's a reggae head too?

STAND-INS AND WEIRD BILLS REVISITED

In 1970 I went to see Black Widow at the Black Prince on the A2 in Bexley, Kent. All the equipment was set up, but the band's van had broken down. To fill the time, the promoter asked the audience if anyone could play. Several brave souls proceeded to conduct long (no vocals) jams to keep us amused. The band eventually turned up, but only had time to play two numbers. Black Widow's lead guitarist was horrified when he found his guitar was covered in blood. The volunteer obviously did not have a pick and shredded his fingers on the guitar strings! Happy days, eh?

Steve Barnes, Kent

On August 12, 2000, my jazz-rock band M.T. Wizzard played a support gig in Bad Neuenahr, Germany. After 15 minutes, our sax/flute player, the late Tim Belbe from the Krautrock legends Xhol Caravan, played one of his weirdest solos. The promoter came to my side and offered more money if we stopped. We stopped and learnt whom we were supporting: Middle Of The Road (of Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep fame).

Edgar Türk, Limburg, Germany

MOJO says: Amazing scenes. Anyone else been paid to stop playing? And thanks to reader Tony Clark for letting us know that when the Buzzcocks weren't rehearsed enough to support the Sex Pistols at their first Manchester gig in 1976, Bolton proggers Solstice had to step in.

CREDIBLE COMEDY RECORDS?

For my sins, I was revisiting Young Ones comedy spin-off LP *Neil's Heavy Concept Album*, and noticed for the first time that members of Hatfield And The North and King Crimson are on it. Are there other records by comedians with 'serious' collaborators?

Richard Cardew, via e-mail

MOJO says: There are many. George Martin produced Peter Sellers from 1959 to 1965 – who can forget The Beatles' She Loves You delivered as if by Dr Strangelove, or A Hard Day's Night in the style of Olivier's Richard III? – while Vic Reeves' 1991 LP *I Will Cure You* featured The Human League's Phil Oakey and The Wonder Stuff, though Vic was turned down when he suggested Mark E Smith take part. The 1977 Ian Dury-assisted Max Wall single England's Glory and Tracey Ullman's early-'80s LPs with Kirsty MacColl and Hank Marvin also fit the brief, but a special mention must go to Charlie Drake's 1975 single You Never Know. It was co-written by Peter Gabriel, while the band included Sandy Denny, Robert Fripp, Keith Tippett and Phil Collins. Fans have likened the song to Willow Farm off Genesis's Supper's Ready, by the way.

FROESE'S LAST TAPE?

I think the current line-up are doing a great job at keeping the Tangerine Dream name going, but what was the last song Edgar Froese worked on before he passed away?

Ian Simmons, via e-mail

MOJO says: According to Jean-Michel Jarre, it was Zero Gravity, a collaborative track released just five months after Froese's death in January 2015, and later included on Jarre's *Electronica 1: The Time Machine* album. "We were immediately in sync," Jarre told MOJO. "We really succeeded to merge our sounds."

HELP MOJO

My brother and I periodically reminisce about the dreamy tones of Arnold – vastly underrated. I remember buying the *Hillside* album (1998) from HMV in Cheltenham and it was one of the best decisions I made. Whatever happened to them?

Sam Pearse, via e-mail

CONTACT MOJO

Have you got a challenging musical question for the MOJO Brains Trust? E-mail **askmojo@bauermedia.co.uk** and we'll help untangle your trickiest puzzles.

Getty (4)

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We have a grab bag of LITA 20 releases, including the above-mentioned box sets, worth more than £800, up for grabs for this issue's crossword prize!

So square your jaw and complete cipher-slinger Michael Jones's crossword and send a scan of it to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk, making sure to type CROSSWORD 339 in the subject line. Entries without that subject line will not be considered. Please include your home address, e-mail and phone number. The closing date for entries is **February 2**. For the rules of the quiz, see www.mojo4music.com

Get involved at: lightintheattic.net

ANSWERS

MOJO 337

Across: 2 Martha Wainwright, 10 Lilac, 11 Station To Station, 12 Alan Wilder, 16 Del Rio, 19 Glory, 20 California Dreamin', 22 Fish, 23 Stalemate, 25 Jay Ferguson, 28 Sara, 29 Vain, 30 Modest Mouse, 32 Tapes, 34 Torry, 35 Hot, 36 Bud, 38 EMI, 39 Nico, 41 Free, 42 View, 44 Rachel, 46 OK Go, 47 Lush, 49 Terry Callier, 50 Slits, 52 One, 53 Ram Jam, 56 Kanye West, 59 Ray, 60 Nobody, 61 Lodestar, 62 Army.

Down: 1 Nigel, 2 Mason Williams, 3 Act, 4 Total, 5 Alone, 6 I Wonder Why, 7 Wet, 8 Is This It, 9 Tunnel Of Love, 12 Arc, 13 Iron Maiden, 14 Do Not Disturb, 15 Road, 17 Leatherette, 18 Crass, 21 Art Garfunkel, 24 Sugar, 25 Jim Reeves, 26 Nash, 27 Anita Lane, 31 Universally, 32 Try, 33 Pyramids, 37 Dig, 40 Coltrane, 43 Whatever, 45 Hero, 48 USA, 51 Lard, 54 Moby, 55 Maya, 57 Etta, 58 Turn.

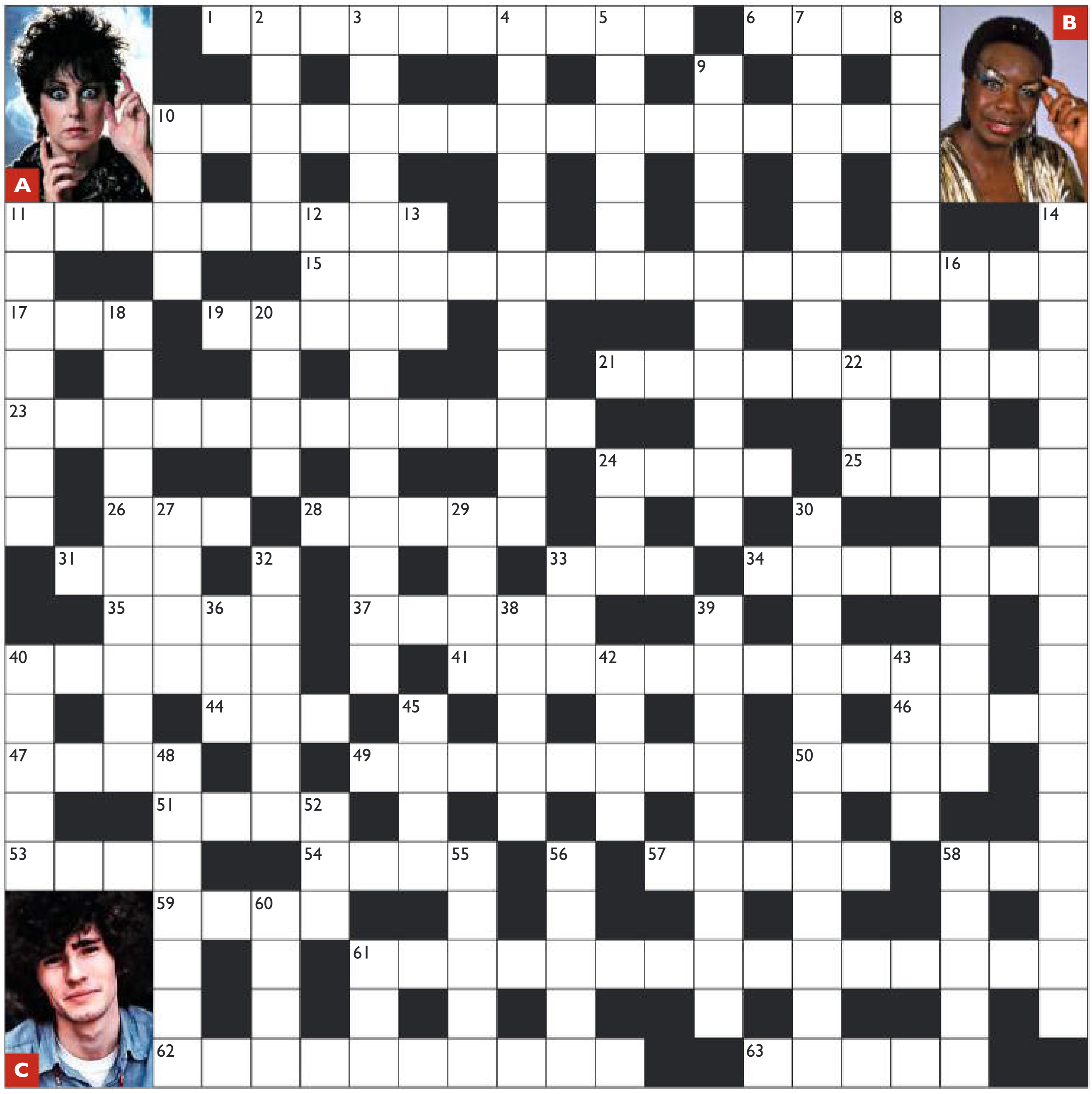
Winners: **Mike Tolley** of **Rotherham**, **Eke Webb** of **High Wycombe**, **Lee Hulcup** of **Aberdeenshire** and **Ian Conway** of **Warminster** each win a GO blu headphone amplifier.

ACROSS

1 See photoclue A (5,5)
6 A Malcolm McLaren album, or the people who really like it (4)
10 Song that namechecks Norman Mailer and Tommy Cooper (4,5,1,6)
11 Nothing Lasts Forever on this Echo And The Bunnymen release (9)
15 His 2020 album was *Lightning, Show Us Your Stuff* (5-3,8)
17 One of the Neds or the Damned (3)
19 ----- Of Fear (The Move) (5)
21 Jamaican reggae star who sang You Are My Angel (6,4)
23 It makes it trickier for The Monks on Black Monk Time (12)
24 Lemonheads LP – played on guitar? (4)
25 It describes a Leftfield hit on the Trainspotting soundtrack (5)
26 Metal band led by Phil Mogg (1.1.1.)
28 Willie Nelson song made famous by Patsy Cline (5)
31 Company that bought phonograph maker and record label Victor in 1929 (1.1.1.)
33 Shock And --- (Neil Young) (3)
34 New Order's Kiss or Lou Reed's Day (7)
35 Just ----, memoir by Patti Smith (4)
37 Foster's fellow folkster (5)
40 Washington, Brent-based reggae singer who released I Sus and Rasta (6)
41 Only current official member of Nine Inch Nails other than Trent Reznor (7,4)
44 Initially a Factory band (1.1.1.)
46 Procol Harum's 1970 album (4)
47 They always work it out, sang Bowie (4)
49 A record sleeve that opens out (8)
50 Daltrey, Townshend, Entwistle and who? (4)
51 Tori, whose hits include Cornflake Girl (4)
53 First name of Paul and Pallett (4)
54 Kinks song that starts in a Soho club (4)
57 Style of Big Band jazz (5)
58 Wu-Tang Clan member whose solo work includes *Liquid Swords* (3)
59 Nickname of Trevor Ward-Davies (4)
61 "Here is a plea from my heart to you…" (Depeche Mode) (5,3,7)
62 See photoclue B (4,6)
63 Pair of cymbals with a pedal (2-3)

DOWN

2 Terry Reid album from 1973 (5)
3 A bootlegger's track by Steve Earle (10,4)
4 Patrick Wolf's debut (11)
5 What planet are The B-52's on? (6)
7 Who could forget a Radiohead release? (8)
8 Crow, who made *C'mon C'mon* (6)
9 Their singer is Robin Zander (5,5)
10 Possibly Moore, possibly Barlow (4)
11 Label that has put out Napalm Death and Rival Sons (7)
12 *Back To The* --- (Wings album) (3)
13 Adderley, jazz trumpeter and brother of Cannonball (3)
14 "Would only mean heartbreak for me" (Aretha Franklin) (1,3,1,6,6)
16 Jethro Tull's lead vocalist (3,8)
18 See photoclue C (3,7)
20 DeMent, Americana artist (4)
22 Unbelievable act (1.1.1.)
24 Sparhawk and Parker (3)
27 Scarborough ---- (trad.) (4)
29 Jesus, whose debut LP was *The Spoils* (4)
30 He wrote the Pink Panther theme (5,7)
32 ------ Killer (Talking Heads) (6)
33 Adam, who was born Stuart Goddard (3)
36 Throbbing Gristle's Third Report (1.1.1.)
38 Opening track on Gang Of Four's *Entertainment!* (5)
39 Kevin Morby's most recent album (9)
40 Resonator guitar used on 54 (5)
42 Award given by the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (4)
43 ---- By Both Sides (Magazine) (4)
45 Where Lead Belly was locked up in on a Tuesday (4)
48 Links The Chordettes and Metallica (7)
52 Could be Dunbar or Stone (3)
55 The -----, who gave us a *Declaration* (5)
56 Two of their albums were named after Marx Brothers films (5)
58 Immense closing track (as originally intended) on The The's *Soul Mining* (5)
60 Billy Corgan's project after The Smashing Pumpkins originally split (4)
61 R&B group The --- Band (1.1.1.)



Alamy (3)

Got hunk for your trunk: early Grand Funk Railroad (from left) Mark Farner, Don Brewer, Mel Schacher; (below right) the four-piece later line-up (from left) Craig Frost, Schacher, Farner, Brewer; (bottom) Don today.

Don Brewer and Grand Funk Railroad

They began with power trio ambitions at the Union Hall. But after seven years of hard rocking, they ran out of track.

HELLO EARLY 1969

Mark [Farner, guitar and vocals] and I had gone through The Pack and Terry Knight And The Pack and The Fabulous Pack, and so forth, and we needed to come up with a new idea. We hooked up with Mel Schacher [bass] from ? And The Mysterians, who was a school mate of Mark's. He was definitely on board.

We first rehearsed at the Union Hall, Local 542 in Flint, Michigan, a big open room with a high ceiling. We'd go in there about eight or nine at night, they let us use it because we were nice guys and would clean up after ourselves! Grand Funk Railroad really began in that room, because we took all the music that we'd been doing and reworked it. The whole idea was to be a power trio. A local guy [David West] was making amps especially geared for really, really loud rock bands and we hooked up with him. That really helped.

Getty (2), Allen Clark

> “Frank Zappa had a difficult time… I felt bad for him.”
> **DON BREWER**

I don't think Mark was taking his shirt off right away [Farner was often bare chested on-stage and off]. That came later, from [manager] Terry Knight's Barnum & Bailey approach to rock'n'roll. He was very big on coaching us to, you know, exaggerate everything, your movements, singing, to make it sound like you're playing an arena. We looked up to him like he was our big brother, taking care of everything that we did and looking out for us.

One day in the Union Hall we started throwing around names and Terry suggested Grand Funk Railroad, after a song he'd written. In Michigan, we had the Grand Trunk Western Railroad. At that time, saying 'funk' was very risqué – people thought you were saying 'fuck'! So it got a lot of attention, and we felt it was very descriptive of who we were, and very powerful as well.

About the middle of 1969 we did a little string of dates up in the North-east. I don't think we got paid for any of them. Not long after, the first Atlanta Pop Festival put us on as the opening act. We went over so well we played all three days. It was amazing, the biggest crowd we'd ever seen. We had to see if this new thing was going to fly, and the only way to find out was to get out there and do it.

GOODBYE SUMMER 1976

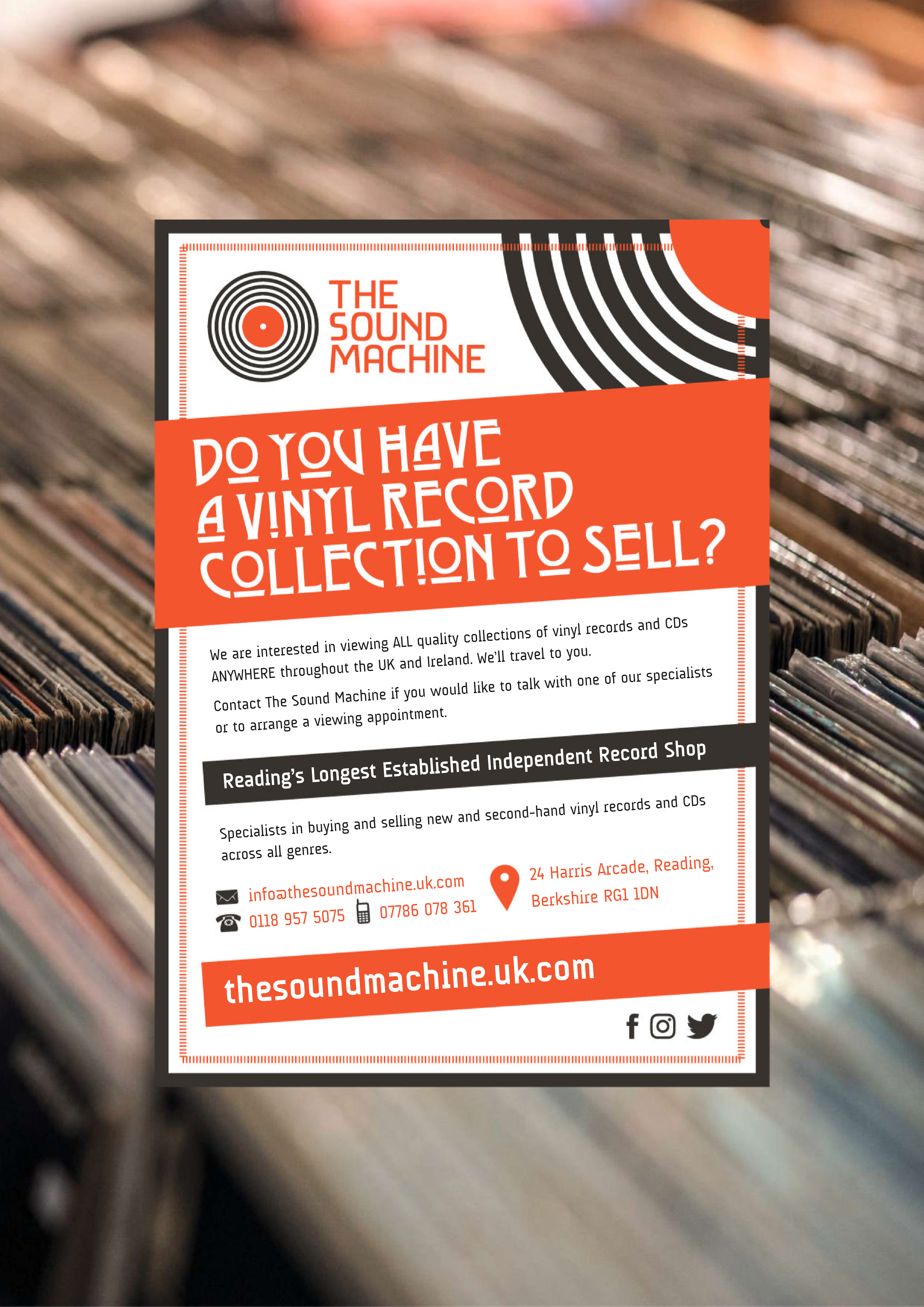
We'd been hitting it pretty hard. From 1969 to 1976 we were under contract with Capitol to do two albums and two supporting tours every year. We'd spend a week or two coming up with the songs, record them in a few days, rehearse and then hit the road and do 40 shows in 40 days. That's what we did for, you know, six years, non-stop. And we'd gone through all these other things, the ups and downs that go along with it [in 1972 they began a bruising legal fight against Terry Knight; the creative dynamic had also shifted with 1973's Todd Rundgren-produced *We're An American Band*], so by the time we got to '76 the band was really not on good terms. Frank [Zappa, producer] had a difficult time getting us through *Good Singin', Good Playin'*. I felt bad for him.

The writing was on the wall. We were actually supposed to go tour in support of that record and we cancelled the tour. Basically, it was kind of myself and Mel and [keyboardist] Craig Frost, and then Mark was on the other side of the fence. I think he really wanted to go off on his own, and the band felt that. That's what led to the band breaking up. I think we went through a couple of meetings, in my apartment in Flint and at the studio we had ['The Swamp']. It wasn't going to be permanent, and nobody was going to take the name and go off on their own. Mark started doing his thing, and Mel and Craig and I started another band called Flint. I never thought [Grand Funk Railroad] was going to happen again – obviously it did – but I can't imagine being back with Farner again. To this day [Brewer and Schacher still lead the band], we've always put on a Grand Funk Railroad show, no matter who the members are.

Later I found out that one of the writers for The Simpsons was a big Grand Funk fan, so whenever he had a chance he would either use the name or the music or something. I thought it was a great endorsement, to be one of Homer Simpson's favourite bands.

As told to Ian Harrison

For Grand Funk updates go to grandfunkrailroad.com



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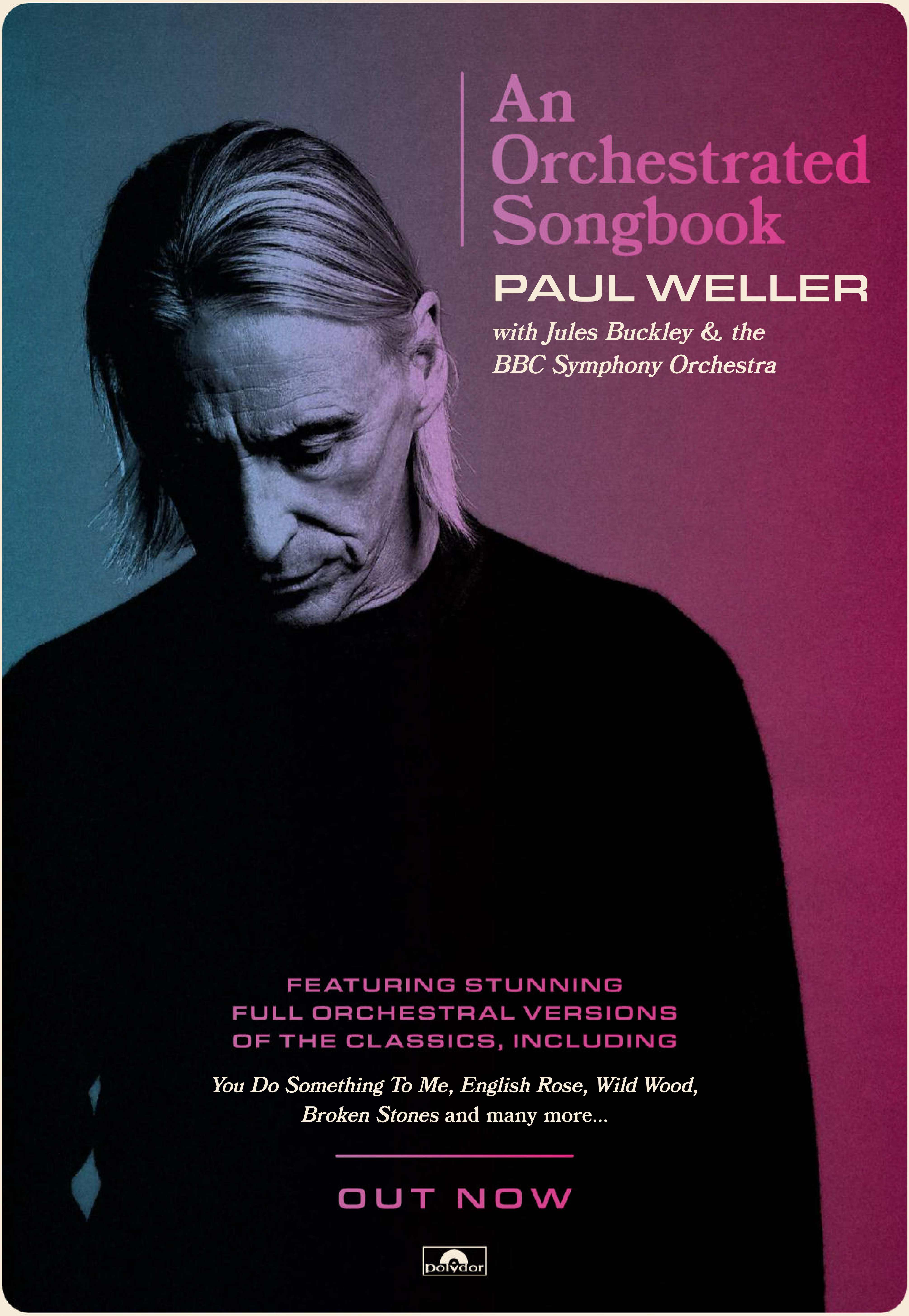

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